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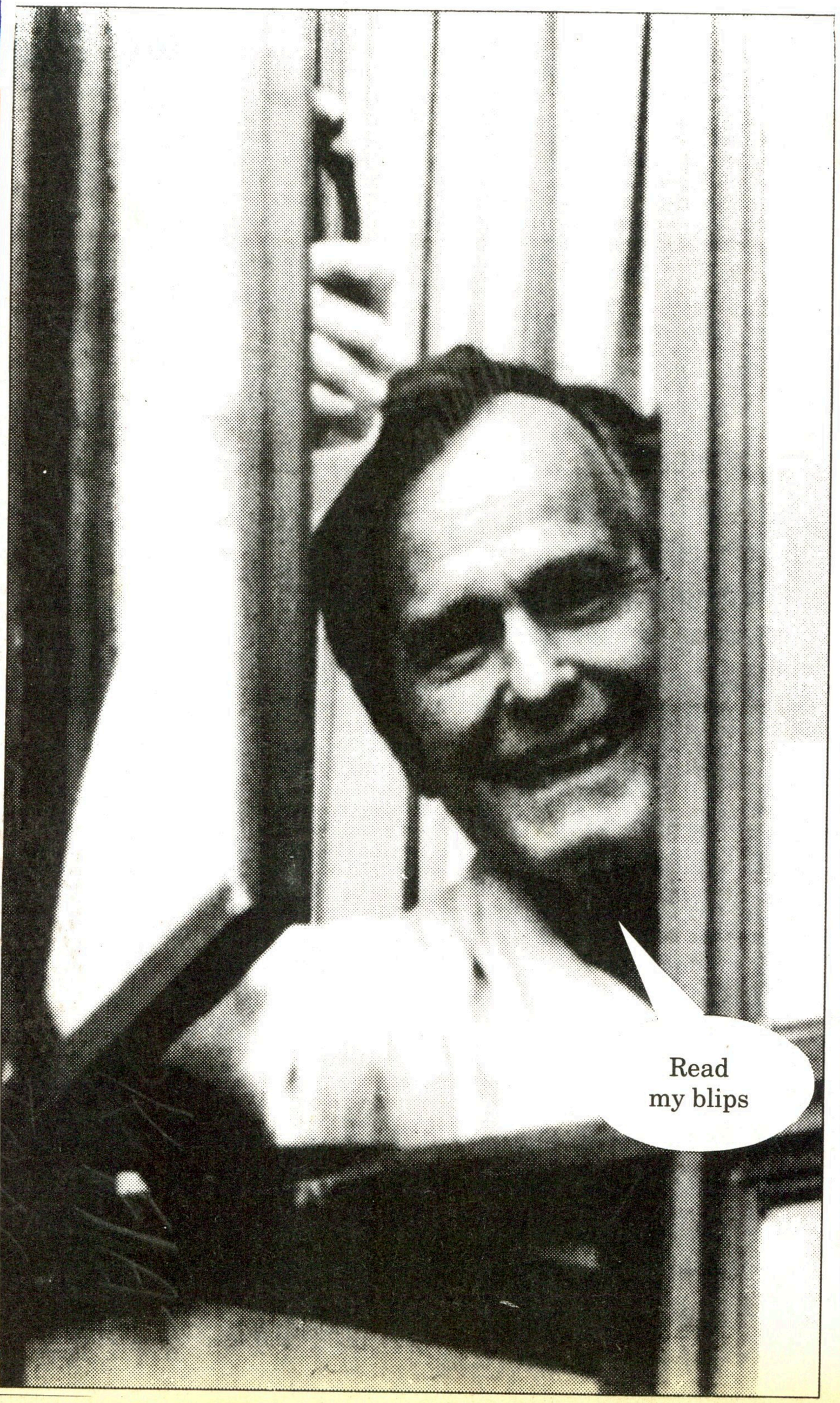

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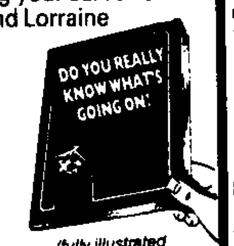

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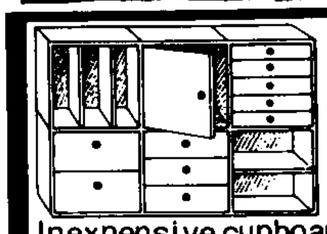

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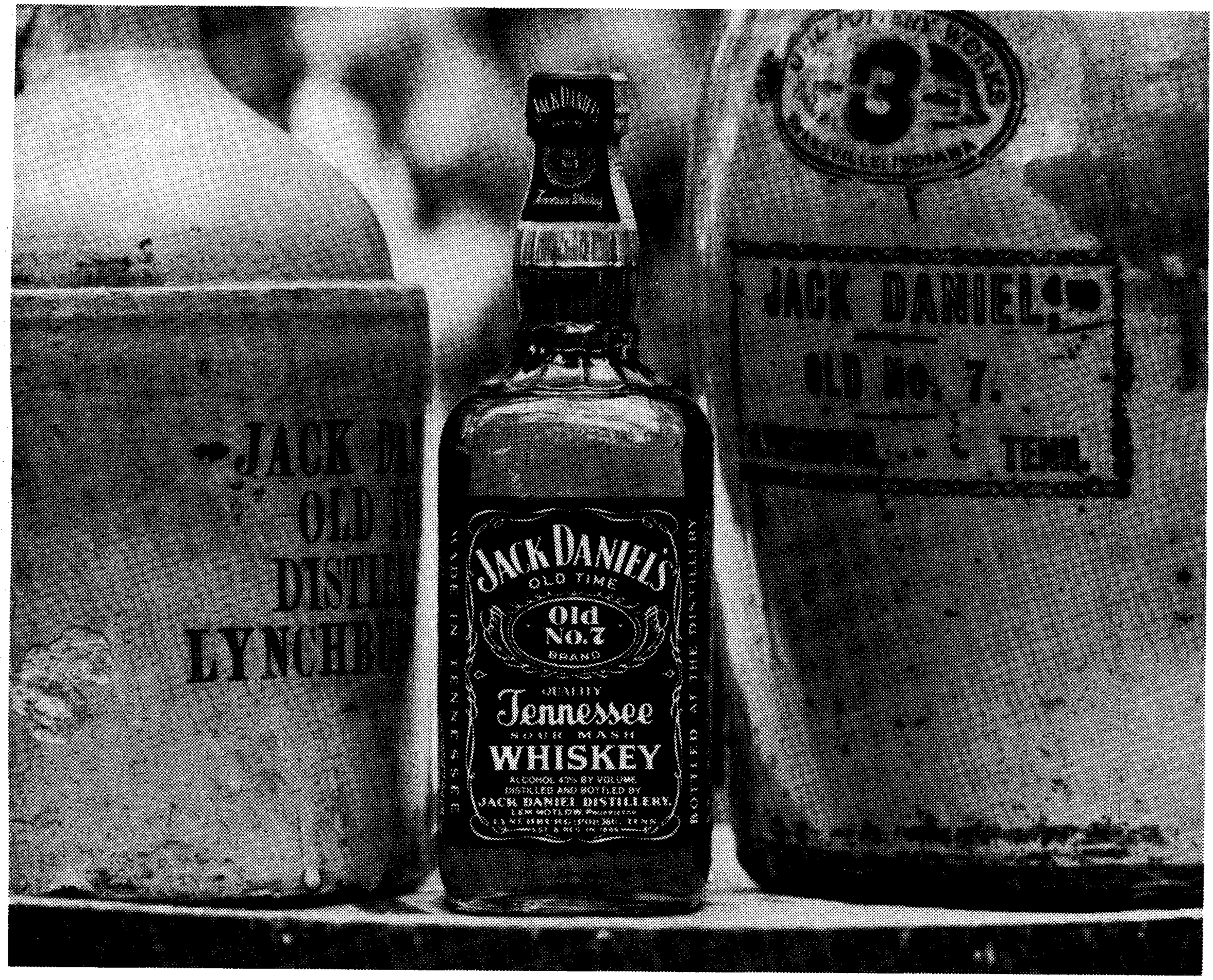

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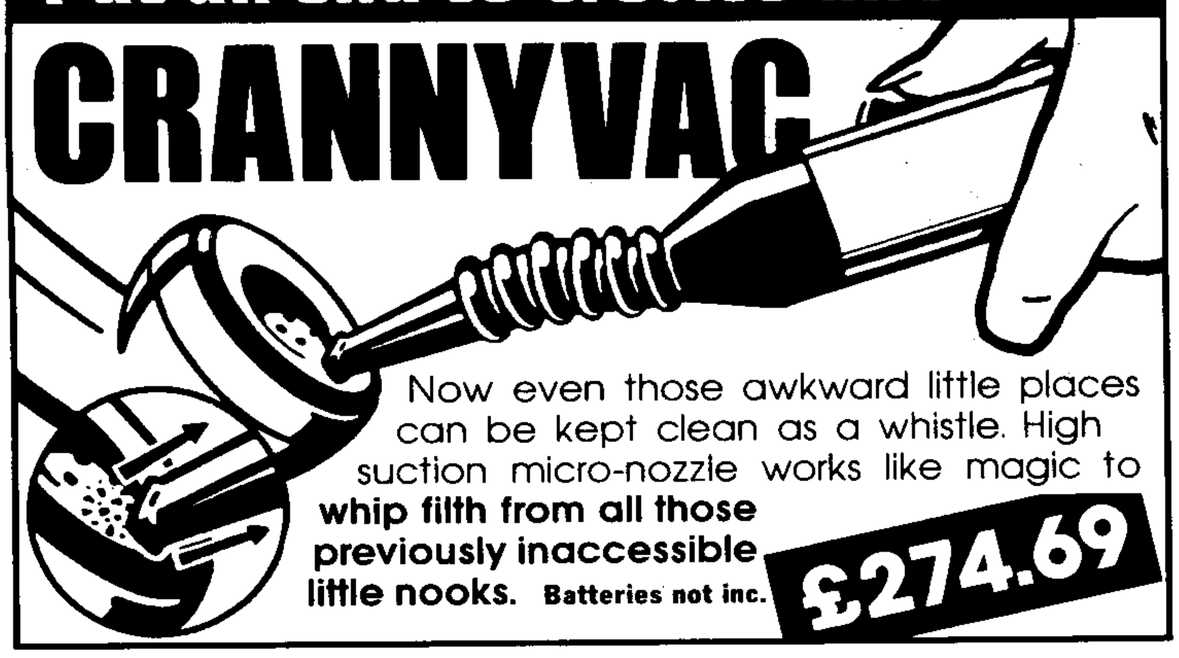

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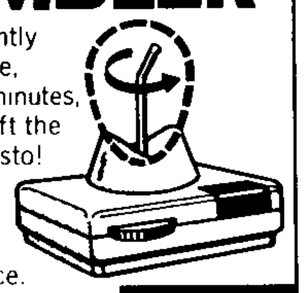

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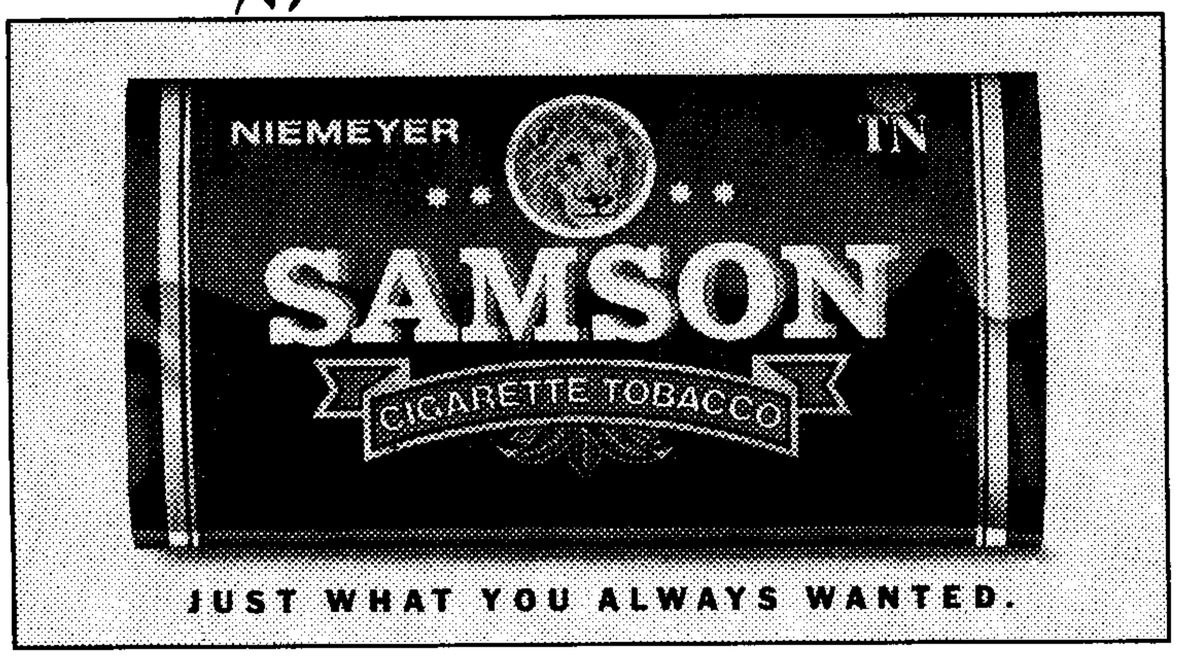

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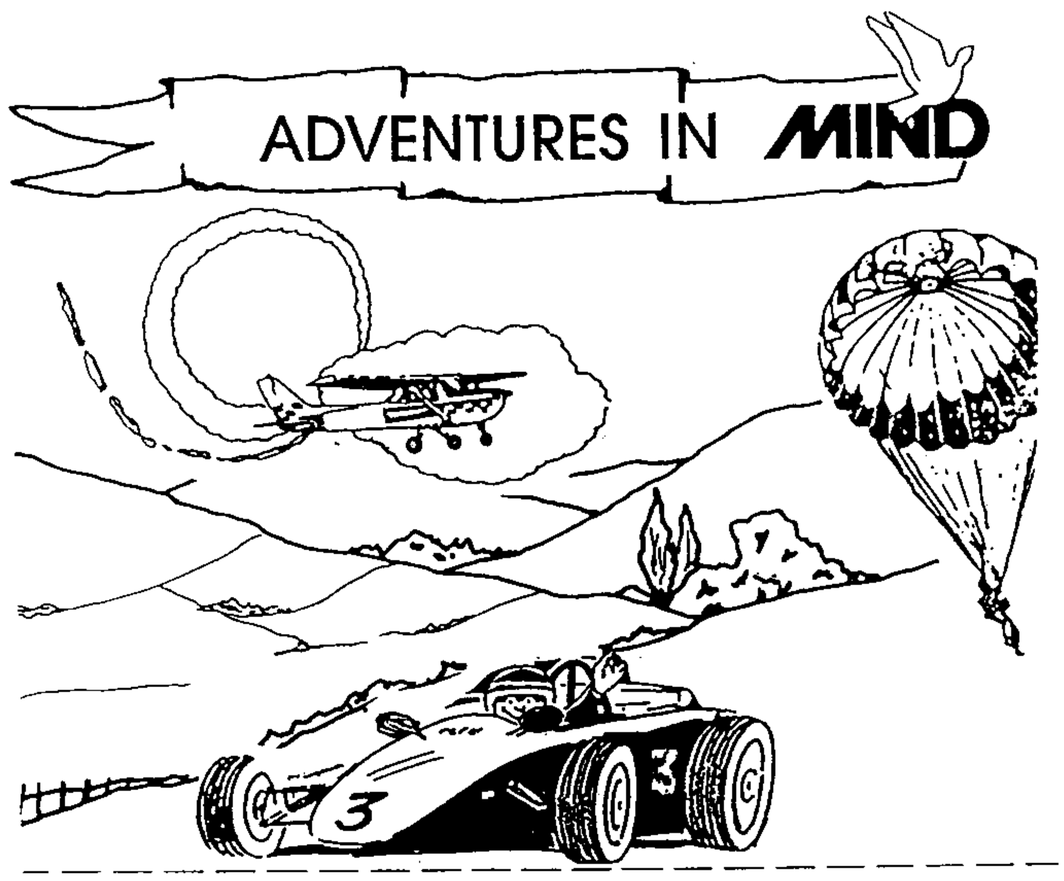

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KENNETH CLARKE has finally gone over the top. He has long been a controversial figure but he has now made a fool of himself.

The Secretary of State for Education said that: "The readers of the *Daily Mirror* are morons."

This is disgraceful coming from a man who owes his livelihood to many ordinary men and women who read tabloid newspapers and pay the taxes which cover his salary.

It is shocking coming from a senior Cabinet Minister who is meant to uphold the laws of decent behaviour in public life.

It is *particularly* appalling coming from a man supposedly concerned with standards of education and language in this country.

For such a man to have made such an error is unforgivable.

He must know that the use of that particular word was probably the biggest mistake of his career.

Saying "readers" when he meant "owners" is something I am sure he will regret for the rest of his life.

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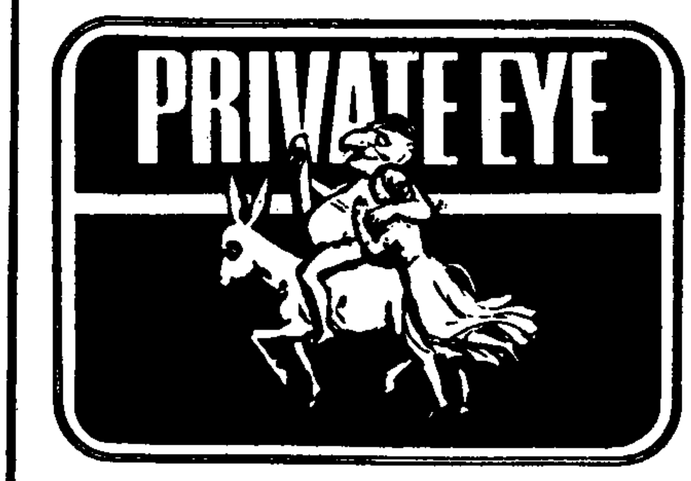


COLOUR SECTION

WHILE President George Bush's health scare reminded the world of the ultimate American Nightmare — a Quayle at the White House — Bush's vice-president is only one problem that won't go away.

The other — Bush's role in the arms-and-dollars Irangate deal that kept American hostages in Tehran until after Ronald Reagan's seccession, thus humiliating Jimmy Carter — is bubbling away nicely.

Eye readers have known the details for ages. But they gained wider circulation last month when the *New York Times* published an article by one Gary Sick, a former National Security Council adviser responsible for monitoring Iran during the Carter presidency.

And now comes a new twist. Moorhead Kennedy, one of the hostages, is considering legal action against the administration on the grounds that her prolonged incarceration made it an accomplice in kidnapping. This could be embarrassing enough to give Bush a real heart attack.

GEORGE CARMAN QC has featured prominently in the heated letters of the *Sunday Times*' legal manager Alastair Brett on the subject which is threatening to unhinge Brett altogether: the Thames TV programme *Death on the Rock*.

In his letter to Liz Forgan, Channel Four's director of programmes, in which he argued at interminable length that Channel Four should not show the award-winning programme in its "Banned" series, Brett wrote: "George Carman QC told Andrew Neil, without reservation, that he would be able to prove that Carmen Proetta's account of the Gibraltar shootings was quite simply wrong or alternatively that she was accusing everyone else at the Coroner's inquest of lying."

This view must be taken together with Mr Brett's suggestions to friends and colleagues that the *Sunday Times* libel case with Carmen Proetta should never have been settled (as it was by paying her £150,000 and apologising), and that George Carman had been too quick to settle it just before it came to court because he wasn't feeling too well at the time.

There had, indeed, been some controversy about Carman appearing for the *Sunday Times* in this case. For Carman himself had appeared in the programme *Death on the Rock* itself, making some anodyne if worthy statements about the importance of checking evidence and the unsuitability of a coroner's inquest for getting to the root of such a controversial matter. Carman had dismissed any suggestion that his appearance made him unsuitable to appear for a newspaper which was being sued by a prominent witness in the programme, and got on with the job. What finally impressed him to advise the *Sunday Times* to settle was the disturbing news that Brett had paid a large sum of money to a convicted criminal's family in exchange for a sworn statement in the libel action. Carman felt with some force that the jury wouldn't think too highly of such means of obtaining evidence (especially as the criminal absconded from prison soon after the money was paid).

How Carman feels about Brett's public use of his name to try to stop the showing of a programme on which he appeared is not yet public knowledge.

WHY oh why have British financial institutions shown such carefulness in subscribing for shares in the Mirror Group, soon to be floated on the stock exchange?

The *Eye* can think of two reasons arising from Cap'n Bob's own prospectus, both of which appear on page 27 of this hallowed document.

Paragraph 13 refers to litigation and states that any litigation outstanding against the group will not materially affect its balance sheet. Naturally, this is a matter of opinion. Sceptics in the City are aware that if all the various claims against the Mirror Group were to be won by the plaintiffs, the liability would total roughly £50 million.

For instance, the trustees of the Mirror Group Pension Fund have threatened to sue the Mirror Group over Cap'n Bob's policy of imposing a moratorium on corporate contributions and his decision to buy stock for the pensioners in an existing public company whose share price has been slipping — Maxwell Communications Corporation.

Even more intriguing is paragraph 14 on material contracts, which purports to explain the relationships between the Mirror Group and Maxwell's myriad of private companies, most of them ultimately owned by his shadowy, Liechtenstein-based family trusts. Reputable City bankers who have read the prospectus have confessed themselves baffled by the tortuous network of Cap'n Bob's empire.

PETER LILLEY's shambolic Department of Trade & Industry is leaking faster than a Kuwaiti oil well judging by the help it is giving big British firms trying to win contracts to put out the raging desert fires.

In March the department appointed a sub-committee to investigate how British companies could tender for the lucrative contracts in Kuwait. Greysuits from Taylor Woodrow, Wimpey and Amec, as well as Sir Peter Darby, former Home Office fire chief, sit on it.

What surprised many was that there was no representation from anyone with any irinovative ideas for fighting oil well fires. These were then invited from small specialists and their imaginative — and confidential — thinking thus came to the attention of the deadbeat giants on the committee.

Lilley's team then cocked things up twice. First, the innovative ideas never reached the Kuwaitis because the DTI was still investigating them *after* Lilley's trip to the Gulf to drum up business. Second, the confidential proposals found their way from the DTI to the headquarters of the big contractors.

For example, Tony Lovell-Smith, of Underwaters Security Consultants, had submitted an innovative fire-fighting technique to the DTI and was more than astonished when he was invited to a meeting at Wimpey's. While he was rightly peeved that his proposals should end up in the hands of industrialists and potential competitors, the "sub-committee" — aka Taylor Woodrow and Wimpey, etc — was unabashed. It much admired his innovative ideas and would he like to join them?

"I didn't see you in B&Q on Sunday"

CITY ROAD echoed to the sounds of wailing and teeth-gnashing last week as the *Indescribablyboring* declared civil war against its Sunday sibling, the *Sindie*.

At issue was the question of which of Andreas Whittam Strobes' two co-founders should be regarded as his favoured son and heir. Is it to be Matthew Symonds, the Cuban-heeled, hamster-cheeked lothario who in effect edits the *Indie* these days? Or will it be the editor of the Sunday paper, saturnine Stephen Glover, a man who (like John Major) tucks his shirt into his underpants?

Hostility between the two has been simmering ever since the *Sindie* was launched last year, with Symonds believing that the money invested in Glover's paper could be more usefully spent on perks for senior executives, such as himself — share options, boy-racer cars, huge houses, etc, etc. As long as Daddy Andreas was around, there was little he could do. But as soon as the ex-saintly one departed on a long trip to Bogota at the end of April (soliciting investment from the Medellin cartel, according to one office wag), Symonds made his move.

On Monday 29 April he summoned senior wallahs from the daily paper to his house in Richmond — a peculiar Victorian edifice made entirely of concrete — where he tried to whip them up into a frenzy of hatred for the *Sindie*. That paper, he raged, is costing the company a fortune. It is staffed by overpaid layabouts. We hacks from the daily paper could produce it ourselves as part of a seven-days-a-week operation and thereby get rid of most of the *Sindie* staff, which in turn would liberate more money for boy-racers, trebles all round and so forth.

For the rest of the week very little journalistic work was done as everyone in the building hurled themselves into the melée of plot and rumour. Henry Streep-Porter of the *Sindie* held a series of mysterious "working breakfasts" for selected hacks at a pub in Clerkenwell. Meanwhile, the smirking Symonds attempted to sow mistrust by inviting two senior *Sindie* hacks to "intimate dinners" at his Richmond bunker, presumably in the hope of seducing them away from Glover.

But time was running out for the Cuban-heeled one, since Whittam Strobes was due back from Bogota by the end of the week. Even Symonds's lieutenants on the *Indie* seemed underwhelmed by his scheme; some of the bolder ones pointed out that the only example of a "seven-day operation" encompassing a daily and Sunday paper is the *Telegraph*, where it has been an unalloyed disaster. The final clincher came when the finance director, Graham Luff, gently revealed to Symonds that creating a seven-day paper would not actually save money.

The wounded Symonds retreated to his concrete lair, snarling, and agreed to drop his plan. But jubilation at the *Sindie* could be shortlived since Symonds may now devote himself to forcing through a simpler cost-cutting solution — closing down the *Sindie* altogether.

CAP'N Bob's *European* — aka *Le Pissepauvre* — has a new business editor in the comely form of Margareta Pagano, formerly of the *Sunday Despondent* and the *Sindie*.

She is impeccably qualified for the job, since in her long career as a City hackette she has always written about Maxwell in the most admiring terms. Not surprisingly, she was the Cap'n's personal choice for the job.

When Maxwell offered Pagano the job last month, there was one small obstacle: the *European* already had a business editor, Anna Foster, who had been there since the launch. (She too had been well qualified for the post, having published an adulatory profile of Maxwell in *Management Today* a couple of years ago.) As recently as January this year she still seemed to be in favour, accompanying Maxwell on a trip to Davos in Switzerland. But now the Cap'n had eyes only for Pagano, and a pretext had to be found for ditching Foster.

Pissepauvre editor John Bryant summoned her into his office and, in tones of outrage, accused her of mis-spelling the name of the chairman of Crédit Lyonnais in a picture caption. This shameful incompetence could not be tolerated. She was sacked forthwith.

Foster did not go quietly, however. For the past fortnight she has been camped out in her office, refusing to leave until the Cap'n paid her off. She finally departed at the end of last week with a cheque for £25,000 in her handbag.

Meanwhile her successor, Maggie Pagano, has made a dynamic start. After a few days' work last week, she announced that she would be taking this week off — even though it is the week of the paper's long-awaited relaunch!

PS: Pagano is not the only new face at the *Pissepauvre*. Ms Emma Soames, who was sacked from the editorship of *Tatler* last year, has now started work at the office — though no one seems sure what she is doing. Whatever it is, she too is admirably qualified for the job: when John Bryant was appointed editor of the *Le P-p*, she wrote a drooling feature in the *Indescribablyboring* praising him as the finest editor ever to draw breath.

Meanwhile, poor Simon Freeman has "disappeared" as *Le P-p*'s news editor. He began to suspect something was wrong when his name and job title mysteriously disappeared from the paper's masthead. Then his computer screen was taken away; and finally his desk was removed to the advertising department. In exasperation, he has decided to go on a two-week freebie to Bali.

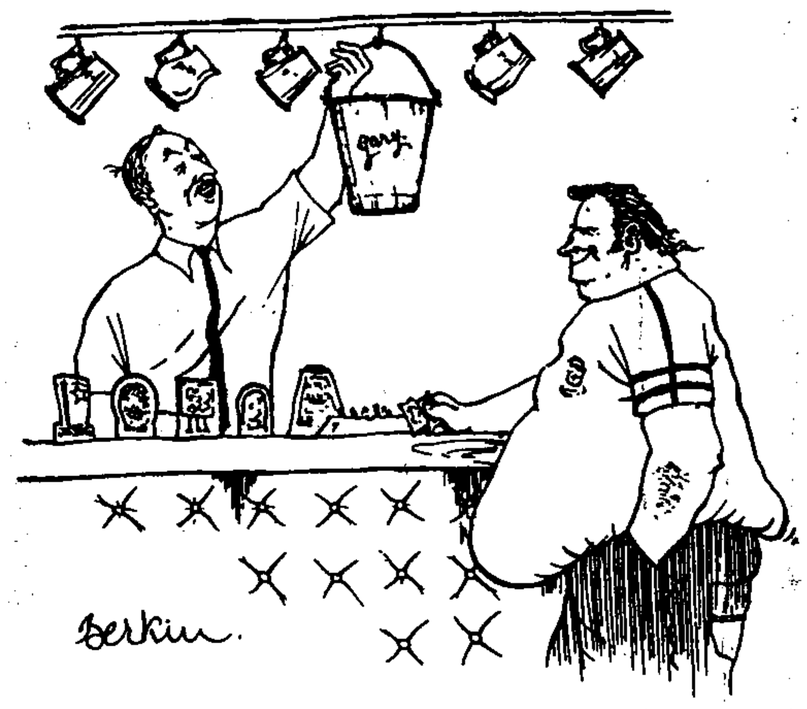
THE long-awaited claim for unfair dismissal brought by Peter Miller, former assistant editor of the *Sunday Mirror*, will come before an industrial tribunal within the next month.

The potential for embarrassment is agreeably high. Plaintiffs at industrial tribunals — just as in courts — have the power to subpoena witnesses, and Miller's solicitors apparently intend to make the most of this facility by summoning Miller's former editor, Lady Lloyd, as well as the Cap'n himself. Book your seats now.

Meanwhile La Bollard's former deputy, the indescribablysleazy Tony Frost, started work last week as deputy editor of the *Sunday Sun* in Newcastle.

Presumably his new bosses at Thomson Regional Newspapers are fully aware that he was sacked from the *Sunday Mirror* last November after being caught selling a *Mirror* story to the rival *News of the Screws*, and that he was extremely lucky not to be prosecuted for the "irregularities" that were revealed by Cap'n Bob's internal inquiry into Frost's conduct.

"We are giving the *Sunday Mirror* and the *News of the World* a bloody nose in the region," Frost's new editor, Chris Rushton, told *UK Press Gazette* last week. "Tony will help us land the knock-out blows."



"Evening Gary. The usual?"

JOE HAINES, Maxwell's sinister hagiographer and former hatchet-man, has undergone a remarkable reinvigoration since the departure of Roy Greenslade from the editorship of the *Daily Mirror*.

Last October, Haines retired as chief political editor of the Mirror Group while continuing to serve as a board director and to write his *Daily Mirror* column from home in Tonbridge (where he lives with his agoraphobic wife Irene and her vast collection of dolls-houses).

However, the recent launch of the Mirror Group stockmarket flotation has rekindled Joe's interest in his work for the paper. Much to the annoyance of the group's deputy managing director, Ernie Burrington, Haines has decided to change the terms of his contract so that he now writes his malicious and drivellish column twice a week instead of merely once, and goes into the *Mirror* offices three days a week.

Surely, this new-found enthusiasm for life at Holborn Circus has nothing to do with the stipulation, in the flotation prospectus, that in order to obtain preferential shares a Mirror Group director must work in the offices for at least 25 hours a week?

THE bouncing Czech has already made a big impression on the ethics of New York journalism.

His newly-acquired *Daily News* preached at the *New York Times* for its scurrilous decision to print the name of the alleged rape victim in the Kennedy Palm Beach case. Interestingly, one of the *New York Times*'s pitiful excuses was that the name had already been used by the *Sunday Mirror* in London.

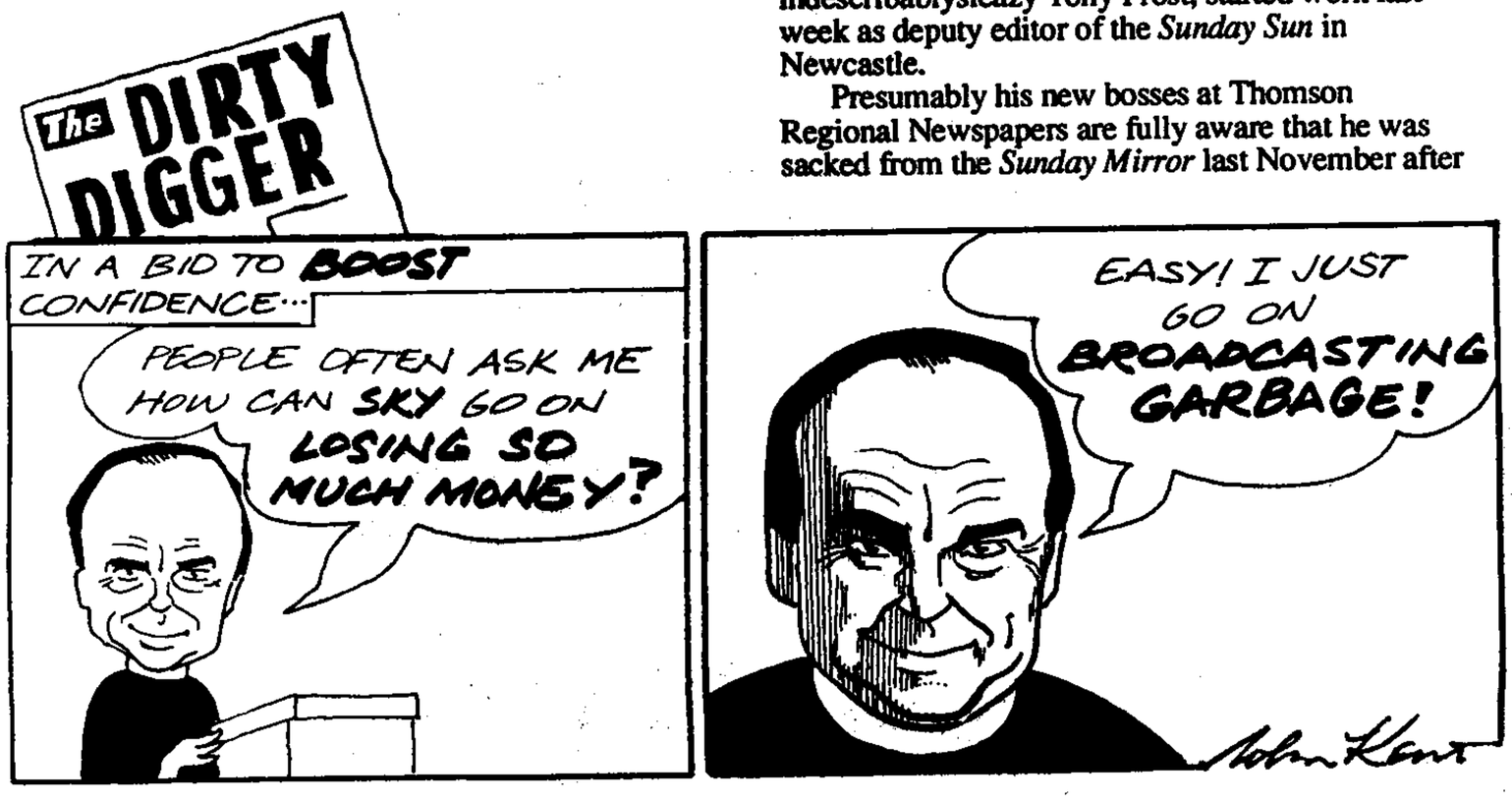
GREAT CONMEN Nos 97 & 98

READERS may recall the trail of unpaid hotel bills left across Oxfordshire last summer by the devout Roman Catholic journalist and author Wilfred De'Ath and his subsequent arrest on various theft charges.

De'Ath had left a number of hotels inviting them to send his bills to Opera North in Leeds, as he was writing a book about the company. Opera North, however, denied any liability, saying only that it had agreed to foot his hotel bills in Leeds on condition that he repaid them from his book advance.

Last week De'Ath was given an 18-month suspended sentence and put on probation after pleading guilty to seven charges of making off without payment, one charge of obtaining services by deception, and one charge of evading liability by deception.

We are pleased to announce, however, that all is not gloom for De'Ath. While out on bail he found a fiancée.


The DIRTY DIGGER
IN A BID TO BOOST CONFIDENCE...
PEOPLE OFTEN ASK ME HOW CAN SKY GO ON LOSING SO MUCH MONEY?
EASY! I JUST GO ON BROADCASTING GARBAGE!
John Kent

THE BUSY office of former prime minister Lady Thatcher is constantly besieged with offers of prominent posts in British industry, with the usual farcically high salaries being doubled or trebled in an attempt to woo the Great Lady to the Board.

So far, all suitors have been spurned, but there is a strong rumour in the City that she may accept the chair of BAA plc, the astonishingly profitable company that runs British airports and their associated franchises. Sir Norman Payne, the present chairman, is due to retire soon and Thatch has been approached as a possible replacement.

Not everyone at BAA is delighted at the prospect. Some recall the close association between the Thatcher family and Michael Ashcroft, the ubiquitous chairman of ADT, the service and security combine whose headquarters are in Bermuda. Ashcroft is a close business buddy of Sir Denis Thatcher and commended himself to Mrs Thatcher when ADT generously agreed to fund a city technology college in Wandsworth.

Ashcroft, who as readers of Slicker's column will know, spends a lot of time in Belize (where he is honorary consul to the EEC), has in the past shown a great deal of interest in BAA and has tried various ways of taking it over. All of these have been rebuffed by the rather conservative BAA management.

Now timid souls at BAA imagine that with Thatcher as chair Ashcroft might get in through the back door. It seems unlikely given his other problems. Much more of a worry is what Thatch herself will get up to in the job — earnestly encouraged by Denis and her old friend Cecil Parkinson (ex-transport secretary in charge of airports).

Points of Order

4.30 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West):

As you know, there has been intense public speculation about and interest in the GCE O-levels of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, with the result that many hon. Members are being asked by the press to supply details of their O-level qualifications and school reports. For the record, I have a list of degrees as long as my arm, most of which were purchased very cheaply from the back pages of *Private Eye*, something which I would encourage the Prime Minister to do.

Hansard

WHILE Peter Brooke and Co meet for talks at Stormont on the future of Northern Ireland, a rather ominous campaign is being waged against Brooke's junior minister, Richard Needham, best known for calling Thatch a cow on his car telephone and being bugged doing so by the Orange ultras using machines supplied by British Intelligence.

Needham is under savage attack for his enthusiasm for privatising Northern Ireland's electricity. Shop stewards at Ballylumford power station have written an angry critique of Needham's demand that the power station workforce be cut from 550 to 350. The stewards make it clear that they will not accept such cuts (which they argue will threaten the provision of power in Northern Ireland) and may well go on strike if Mr Needham won't listen to them.

The mere suggestion of such a strike at Ballylumford must terrify all the earnest negotiators at Stormont. Last time Ballylumford went on strike (for Protestant supremacy in 1974) the entire government was brought to its knees.

THE *EYE* has always been amused by the lifestyle of the Labour MP for Coventry West, Geoffrey Robinson, who resides in a Lutyens-built mansion in the Surrey stockbroker belt.

In February, while out shooting pheasant with his 12 year-old son, Robinson succeeded in shooting the boy in the foot. He was taken to the Royal County Hospital in Guildford for emergency treatment, and the police later cautioned Robinson for using a shotgun licensed in someone else's name.

When Mr Guy Gammell, a neighbour, walked up the drive to Robinson's mansion intent on delivering a pot plant and a letter of condolence from the local church in Godalming, he was set upon and savaged by Robinson's five guard dogs — two great danes and three terriers.

Fortunately, Mrs Robinson was at home and able to rescue the petrified visitor. She drove him to hospital (he required 20 stitches) and Mr Robinson, in order to avoid the inconvenience of being charged, has had all five dogs put down.

IF LABOUR wins the election, who will succeed Lord Mackay of Clashfern as Lord Chancellor?

The likeliest lad, until he was made a lord and promptly took the Tory whip, was Robert Alexander, the top-running QC who could have had any judicial job he wanted but preferred to become chairman of the National Westminster Bank.

This caused much shock horror in left-wing legal circles where Alexander had long been regarded as a Labour sympathiser (his wife is a Labour Party member). And now that Alexander is no longer available for Kinnock's woolsack, and as there are no lawyers of sufficient repute in Labour's ranks, how about the man who has shown more zeal for legal reform than any socialist predecessor? Step forward, Lord Mackay of Clashfern.

ROY HATTERSLEY's Sparkbrook constituency saw some sudden changes following the article in the last *Eye*.

First came the defection of ward chairman Mohammed Rafique to the Conservatives. He claimed he was sick of socialism. In fact he was about to be ejected by Hattersley's opponents who discovered that he had declared a false address and lived in neighbouring Selly Oak.

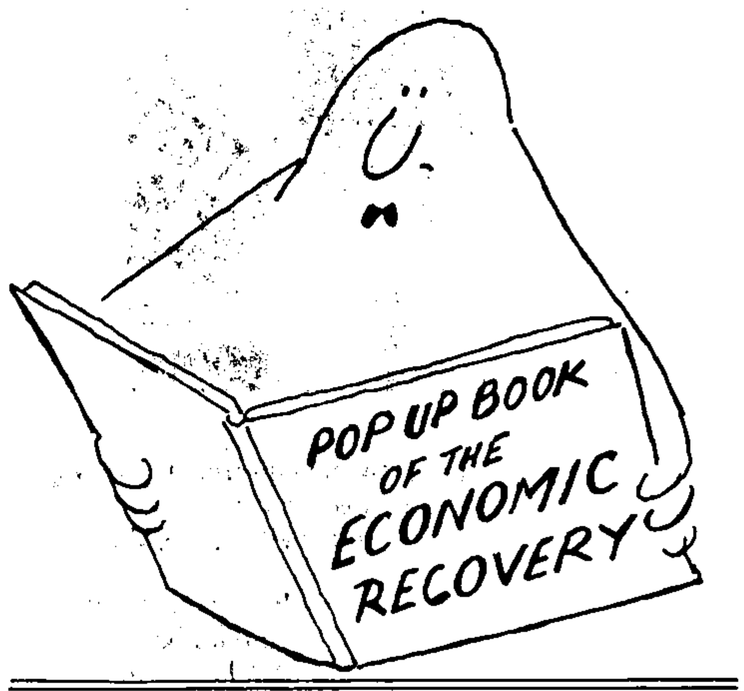
Rafique, a prime mover in fixing the ethnic vote in Sparkbrook, also felt cheated of his promised reward of a seat on the city council. A selection battle against sitting Sparkbrook councillor Bhagat Singh had gone against him, as had a subsequent high court battle. Now Sparkbrook is in a distinctly unstable state and Fattersley's stooges, notably local councillors Khalid Mahmood and Sir Richard Knowles, who doubles up as council leader, are moving fast to repair the damage.

THE left-wing weekly *Tribune* went to town last week over the House of Lords.

The front page said it was Time To Get Rid of the Lords; the leading article said the same thing; and the political commentator Hugh MacPherson devoted his column to the theme.

The next page had a column by the paper's regular economic columnist, Professor Meghnad Desai of the London School of Economics. Four days earlier, he had been made a life peer by Downing Street. The new editor, Paul Anderson, served a helpful apprenticeship for this demonstration of free will: he was an anarchist. He said: "I am not going to sack him".

'Backbiter'



TAXATION NEWS

THE Inland Revenue may not be known for its imagination, but someone somewhere has shown unusual creative flair in the area of tax fraud.

As reported in *Eye* 764, since last year thieves in the London area had tried to purloin £1.8 million by defacing cheques made out to the IR by simply inserting fictitious names after the initials.

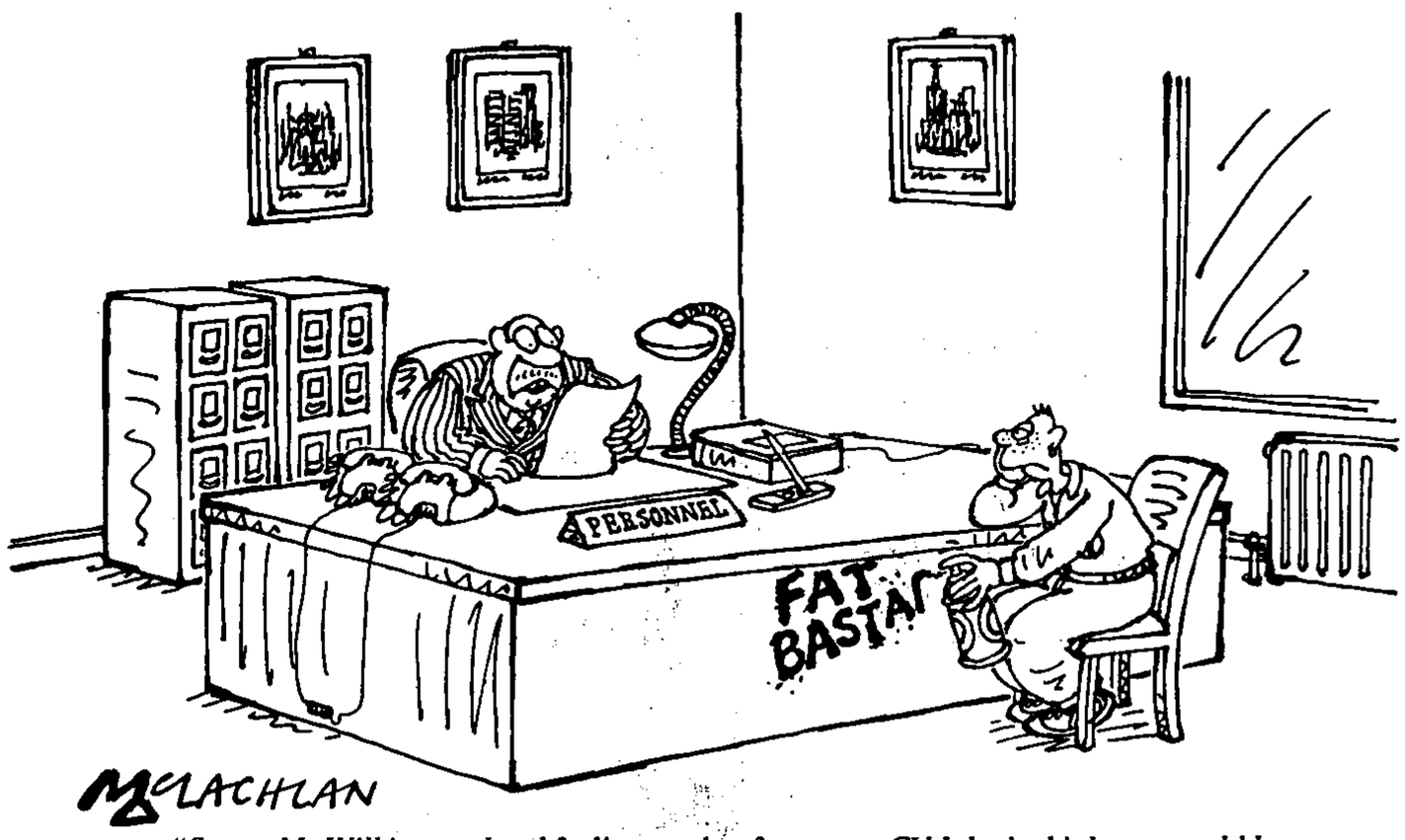
To counter this, the IR advised its paying customers to make out cheques to INLAND REVENUE while marking them TAX ACCOUNT. Now rumour reaches the *Eye* that an enterprising entrepreneur has opened a bank account for a new company: FINLAND REVENUE **LEISURE**. Most ingenious.

POP-EYE

GORMLESS *Sun* pop columnist Piers Morgan has rushed to the defence of the men behind the irritating Jive Bunny records.

A young, hip writer like Piers could be expected to revile rip-off "mix" tracks and the banal DJs who produce them; but an obscure Canadian music critic who dared pour scorn on Jive Bunny was promptly upbraided by Morgan, who cited seven million sales as proof of their talent.

This is only the latest in a series of tributes to Jive Bunny, an act way past its sell-by date for even the *Sun's* dim readers. But judging by the constant plugs, Morgan obviously feels differently. This has nothing to do with the fact that Jive Bunny have agreed to perform free of charge this month at a wedding reception for someone called Piers Morgan.



"Sorry, Mr Wilkins, no hard feelings — but from your CV I don't think you would be right for this company"

Grovel

VISITING old friends at Ford Open Prison, Arundel, I am much amused by the behaviour of the least popular prisoner there, Mr Anthony Parnes, the well-known stock exchange swindler.

Judging by the size of the limo which appeared every morning at the prison gate to whisk him to his appeal in London, the recession has not hit him too hard.

While fellow prisoners greatly enjoyed his absence, it has knocked the bottom out of the "cards for tobacco" market which Tone financed almost single-handedly, beating prison records with consumption of 80 cigarettes a week.

After prolonged pleas from other lags, though, Parnes has been moved into a single room at the prison's much-cherished "Bishops Road" residence. One of the strangest sights in West Sussex was the procession of Parnes and his safari of helpers, hired in the dining room on a rare visit there by the stockbroker, carrying tea chests of his procured possessions to his new room.

Other prisoners watched agog as the room was emulsioned, a fitted deep pile carpet installed, together with curtains, a new mattress, speakers for the Walkman, and a large mirror — presumably the latter to accommodate the stockbroker's legendary ego.

● *I HEAR that a biography is to be written of Mrs Thatcher's erstwhile chum, British Airways' sinister chairman Lord King of Wartnaby.*

He is a fascinating subject for such a study. Why, for instance, has he always been so secretive about his early life? And what about his little-known attempt to rescue the corrupt architect John Poulson, who is his brother-in-law?

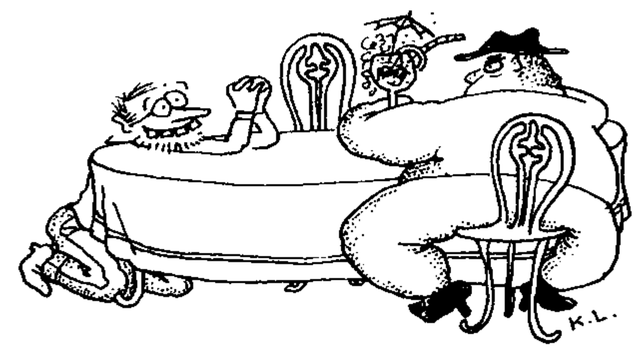
The biography, however, is to be written by William "Kaiser Bill" Davis, the former editor of Punch who is now chairman of the British Tourist Authority. By an amazing coincidence, Davis has an extremely lucrative contract with British Airways as the publisher of its trashy in-flight magazine, High Life. In the circumstances it seems unlikely he will be broaching any questions that might embarrass his lordship.

ON A VISIT to Bradford to encourage the populace to read *The Satanic Verses*, I pick up a leaflet that was distributed last month urging British followers of Islam to deface their Census form.

"O Muslims," it reads, "one of the questions in the Census will ask you about your 'Ethnic Group'. The only categories given to you to respond to this question are 'White', 'Black-Caribbean', 'Black-African', 'Black-Other', 'Bangladeshi', 'Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Chinese'... We feel these categories are racist and unacceptable because *Islam* is the identity which defines our culture, needs, wants, aspirations and views on the future."

A telephone number printed at the foot of the leaflet, which purports to come from the "Islamic Secretariat of the UK", turns out to be the direct line of my old friend Imam Cat Stevens, Islam's answer to David Icke. It seems he is upset by the ethnic question because it reminds him of the embarrassing fact that he isn't an Asian. And if he can't be one, he reasons, why should anyone else?

Pseuds Corner



I once came across [Orson] Welles. It was in Pamplona the year that Hemingway died, 1962 I think. Welles was just sitting there and I was very keen to talk to him. So I went up to him and asked him if a chair was taken and he shouted at me and said yes. It increased my admiration for him.

STEPHEN FREARS
Guardian

Imagine an environment where the worst crime is to possess preconceptions. Where objects, people and events can never be accepted for face value. Where original thought is the only way.

It's not Utopia. It's Marks and Spencer Information Technology and the people who work here are people like you.

MARKS & SPENCER
recruitment booklet

"I have reality in my life — the reality in my life is staggering."

JULIA ROBERTS
The Late Show

Four o'clock. I'm at Buckingham Palace and I'm wearing jeans. This takes a considerable amount of strength of purpose. After all, everyone around me is wearing off-the-peg Austin Reed, or better...
I'm wearing jeans to symbolise the continuing independent spirit of Channel 4 Arts, and to communicate (through body language) my resolve to ensure that this series will remain lively and questioning and daring...

WALDEMAR JANUSZCZAK
Guardian

VEGABIOKINESIOLOGY COURSE
A training course in Vegabiokinesiology will be held in Southampton on Saturday and Sunday, 22nd and 23rd June 1991. The course will cover the basic protocol of Vegatesting using simple applied kinesiology as the diagnostic tool.

Centre for The Study of
Complementary Medicine

So the pregnancy was an accident?
"Oh, yes, but I was very much in love with the father when I got pregnant and this child was almost like a divine conception, however strange that seems. Everything about the child and my pregnancy has been graced — I've been in a state of grace."

CATHERINE OXENBERG
Hello

CONTRIBUTORS: M.A. Doyle, Pascal Breitschmid, William Sitwell, E.P. Wilson, V.F., Anon.

£10 paid for entries

Hon C. Monckton

IN ISSUE 751 (28 September 1990) we alleged that Christopher Monckton was in the financial mire after losing a £60,000 investment, that he had tried to persuade his parents to make over their home to him and become his domestic servants and that he had had the contents valued during their absence on holiday.

We accept that all these allegations were wholly untrue. We have accordingly apologised to Mr Monckton in open court for all the embarrassment and distress our story caused to him and to his family and have in addition paid his legal costs in full.

AMAZING scenes at the party to celebrate the survival of the *New Statesman*.

Diminutive Welsh sex kitten Jaci Stephen sidles up to seedy would-be *Statesperson* editor, Edward Pearce, and pinches him on the bum.

Does she fancy him, I ask? No. It transpires that she has been bet 50p by her friend, Bruce Anderson, to harass his rival biographer of John Major.

"Brute" Anderson is, however, taken aback when the pocket Glenda asks how much he would pay for more intimate attention. Sadly, he has no time to answer because Jaci has collected her reward and wrapped herself around a startled John Pilger.

TO THE Groucho Club for the launch of Lynn Barbie Doll's book of interviews, *Mostly Men*.

After the party has ended, I notice one of the guests engaged in a protracted discussion with members of the local constabulary. He had evidently been spotted in a tired and emotional state as he was about to climb on to a motorcycle. When the police searched his bag, they discovered a bottle of wine, four knives, two portable phones and four miniature pots of jam, all of which, it transpired, had been surreptitiously removed from the club.

The light-fingered gentleman was one Nicholas Brooks, a mysterious, bow-tied character who is often to be found at publishers' launches, scoffing the free fare and purporting to be a hack from the pisspoor *Londoner's Diary* on the *Evening Standard*. In fact, he is an imposter, though he *has* been caught in the *Evening Standard* offices on occasion, rifling through the *Diary*'s invitations file.

I understand Brooks is not to be prosecuted, since he was able to persuade the police that he had been on heavy medication.

AN URGENT press release informs me that Crown Confectionery, a firm making upmarket chocolates, has "embarked on a major expansion programme under the guidance of their new chairman, Mr Naim Attallah".

Crown, it reveals, was "first brought to the attention of Mr Attallah when launching his most famous book *Women*. He asked one of his secretaries to find a company who could produce some personalised luxury chocolates as a present for his guests at the launch." The Palestinian tycoon was so taken by the bonbons that he bought the company (Pass the sick bag, Alice, or rather Camilla/Sophie/Emma etc.)

"A man of Attallah's talents... can only spell success," the press release adds. "Attallah's name is synonymous with quality."

Presumably this is a reference to his vulgar perfumes "Avant L'Amour" and "Après L'Amour", and to the many pornographic books published by his imprint Quartet, such as *Naked London* (pictures of Camilla/Sophie/Emma etc with no clothes on).

THE new chief executive of the Pru, "Mick-the-Bruiser" Newmarch, may well deserve every penny of his new salary of £1 million a day, but his behaviour of late has become distinctly treasonable.

One of the many subjects on which his staff hear him regularly pontificate is his low opinion of our beloved Queen. This did not prevent them proposing to use a picture of Her Maj on the annual bonus notice sent to the Pru's one million policy-holders. But it was on Newmarch's instructions that the image of the hated Brenda was removed before the bonus notices went to press.

Pip Pip!

"It's to keep the ruddy kids off the farm land!"

ORCADIAN NEWS

THE infamous Orkney satanic child abuse saga draws to a close with the news that Mcknacker has completed investigations and will take no further action.

Despite this, and the announcement of a judicial inquiry, Orkney Islands Council's social services department is continuing its appeal against the decision of the Sheriff's Court (estimated cost £500,000) to order the return of the children who had been snatched from their homes in dawn raids.

The OIC is now in turmoil. It was still reeling from the comments made by the sheriff when Scottish secretary Ian Lang told it to reinstate Katherine Kemp, the recorder the council has now tried to sack twice. She was suspended 13 months ago after criticising the running of a children's home and, even though her comments are now known to have been justified, all attempts to have her reinstated failed.

Her long overdue reinstatement has resulted in threats of resignation from several councillors and the council may now have to release the report into the running of the home — which it has sat on for several months — to clear the matter up.

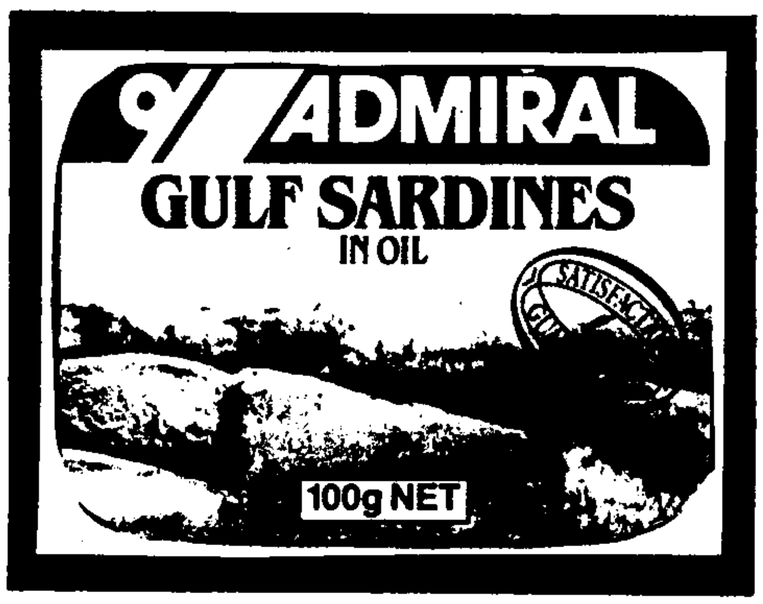
Islanders are grateful, however, that social workers have been prevented from doing any further damage. It is common knowledge they had a hit-list of a further 20 children who were to be taken into care.

Interestingly, the list included the children of a doctor, an acknowledged expert in his field — behavioural psychology — and a man who has not been afraid to speak his mind throughout the child abuse controversy. Last week he was forced to send his wife and children to England after being tipped off that their names were on the hit-list. The doctor has said openly that the names appeared for no other reason than that he had supported the families whose children had been snatched unnecessarily.

Other Orcadians, who for one reason or another could not send their families away, have been cowed into silence and those who speak to the media have received letters suggesting they should move from Orkney. One man received a strange telephone call last week from a lady who chose to remain anonymous. She suggested that it would be better if he were living elsewhere when his wife has a baby in July.

This was an improvement on his previous expectations as he expected social workers to turn up with a place-of-safety order for the baby and a warrant to arrest his wife for refusing to give it up.

It is widely hoped that the return of Mrs Kemp will bring normality back to the islands. It's thought most unlikely that she would have allowed children to be snatched from their beds without requiring a degree of evidence. The fate of those responsible for the current mess is less clear.



NOOKS and CORNERS

YOUNGER readers of this column perhaps need reminding that its full title is "Nooks & Corners of the New Barbarism".

Barbarism takes several forms, of course, which have always and will always be with us; but there are certain new strains which have flourished particularly vigorously over the last decade. This is the attitude which sees the value of things only in terms of cost and efficiency.

The Thatcher years saw the rule of the chartered accountants and the management consultants, who failed to understand what certain institutions were actually *for* and so destroyed them in a search for the chimera of efficiency. The Victoria & Albert Museum was, perhaps, the principal such victim of the grey men; symbolised by the insulting presence of economical Lord Armstrong as chairman of the trustees. Now the National Monuments Record is set to become another victim of the accountants and, as with the V&A, the losers will be the public: the NMR is celebrating its half-centenary by disappearing to Swindon.

As with the system of listing historic buildings under the town and country planning acts, we have Hitler to thank for the NMR. What began as the National Buildings Record was a response to the destruction of the Second World War: when the Georgian buildings of London were destroyed by developers, or greedy landlords, or road engineers, it was the inevitable price of progress; but when the same result was achieved by German bombs it was barbarism. Even so, historic buildings damaged in the Blitz were being cleared away before any photographic record was made, so, inspired, in particular, by (Sir) John Summerson, this archive was established to make a record of what was beautiful and valuable before the Luftwaffe completed its work.

That task of recording did not cease with the end of the war, for other forms of barbarism continued to take their toll. Today there are some seven million photographs recording every city, town and village in the country illustrating the country houses destroyed in the scourge of the 1950s and the streets raped in the 1960s. Today, the photographs of English buildings are stored in red boxes in Fortress House in Savile Row. Here they can be inspected, free, by the public, who may order copies. Many of the photographs which have illustrated this column over the last decade have come, deviously and without acknowledgement, from the admirable NMR.

So why move it to Swindon, where it will be largely inaccessible to the public? Efficiency, of course. Last year Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte delivered its final report on a "marketing strategy for the NMR". Its conclusions were seized on by civil servants convinced that money could be saved by moving out of central London and so reducing rents and expenses. This also appealed to the dreary, suburban-minded archaeologists who dominate the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England which, unfortunately, in 1963 swallowed up the National Buildings Record. Neither appears to understand that photographs are not documents that can be transmitted by computer or fax but are images that need to be studied carefully. And this is difficuLt to do when they are all in Swindon.

Swindon has its charms, though they are few. The real point is that it is not London. The accountants and marketing men have, as usual, forgotten what a capital city is for. A big, centralised city is not an aberration which can be cured by locating offices elsewhere; it is an inevitable and necessary consequence of the modern world. Have the bureaucrats not noticed that roads and railways tend to lead directly to London rather than to Swindon?

Museums, libraries and other archives are concentrated in the capital, along with countless headquarters, because that is the place where most people can use them with the greatest ease and least expense. London is convenient for people in Norwich or Birmingham, Ramsgate or Cleethorpes; Swindon only suits those living near the M4. It is impossible to conceive of the French moving national archives out of Paris. Why are we trying to do this in London?

But is there, I wonder, a more sinister motive behind this absurd plan? For it is surely not a coincidence that English Heritage is also moving — to Nottingham, a place marginally less inconvenient than Swindon. The civil servants know perfectly well that many of their best staff will not make the move, so the organisation will be slimmed down. It will also become marginalised, out of people's sight and mind, and so, perhaps, will wither away — and then, as with the NMR, the accountants can argue that the organisation might as well be wound up. And many would welcome that, as people concerned with historic buildings are nothing but a nuisance who impede the prime objective of modern life which is making money.

Hitler gave us our present systems for protecting and recording historic buildings; will Lady Thatcher's legacy be their disappearance?

'Piloti'

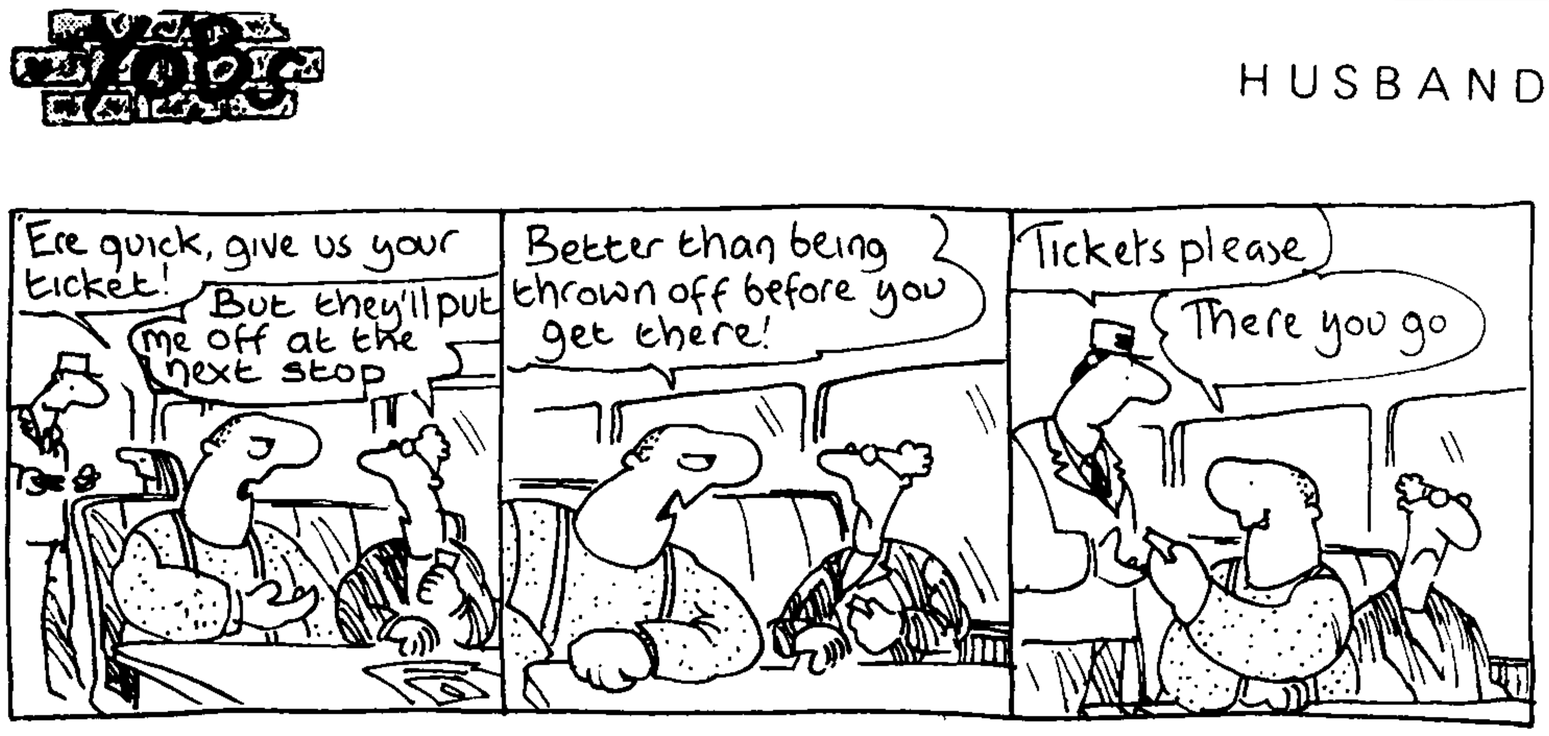
MANX NEWS

THE Isle of Man is on direct flight routes to Belfast and Dublin. It also has a freeport at Ronaldsway which is controlled by a De Beers' subsidiary with a private runway (see *Eyes passim*). The freeport was a gift to De Beers by the Manx government.

In theory security at the airport should be tight; but in practice it isn't. The only baggage checks with radar are for departing passengers and an *Eye* journalist had no difficulty walking through the freeport area some two weeks ago and driving with an associate on to the main runway and gaining access to hangars surrounding it.

This appalling lack of security may be upsetting for De Beers; but it will be more than upsetting for the Manx government. Customs and special branch have offices at the airport, but the policing is left to the department of highways, ports and properties, whose minister is one A.A. Callin.

Mr Callin is a professional politician of the Manx variety. He and his department have assured those interested enough about security at the airport that everything is all right. Quite.


Yobs
HUSBAND
Ere quick, give us your ticket!
But they'll put me off at the next stop
Better than being thrown off before you get there!
Tickets please
There you go

FTVE

Franchise Watch 3:

TV-am (1981 - ?)

SIR (courtesy of Thatch) Paul Fox, the elderly skinhead who was lured back from a lucrative career at Yorkshire Television to be damage-controller at the BBC, had scarcely retired from the corporation last week when he noisily addressed the question of the quality of British breakfast television.

He now says, emphasising that he is a man who generally loves and devours TV, that he listens to Radio 4 in the mornings because the morning television service is so poor. He is particularly dismissive of the efforts of TV-am, claiming, for example, that the company's Gulf War coverage was so bad one had to watch the ITN news summary, when the programme ended, to find out what was going on.

It should be made clear that Sir Paul's interest in discussing the nature of the morning shows is not merely intellectual. Immediately on leaving the BBC, he was able to announce an interest in Daybreak, a consortium bidding against TV-am — a consortium which includes the aforementioned wonderful ITN. The consortium is promising breakfast television "with meat" (bacon, presumably?) and his outburst raises two immediate questions: 1) What does Sir Paul's revelation, now that he was unable to watch even the BBC breakfast show, tell us about his tact and loyalty towards people who were, after all, his colleagues and underlings until a few days ago? 2) Given that, by his own tacit admission, he seems to have failed to improve the BBC's *Breakfast News* (formerly *Breakfast Time*) during several years at the corporation, why should anyone believe he'll be able to work the trick now he's left?

To set his remarks in context, it needs to be acknowledged that breakfast television is one of the two genres (the other being situation comedy) in which American programming is significantly superior to British. No London-based wake-up show has ever matched the balance between proper news, celebs and local weather and traffic info which is to be found in, say, NBC's *Today* programme. Our boys now offer a choice between *Breakfast News* (BBC1), which is informative but dry, and *Good Morning Britain* (TV-am), which is now hosted by presenters like Mike Morris, a man who has the air of someone allowed to do the job for a day thanks to *Jim'll Fix It*.

The rest is aerobics, recipes and interviews with Hollywood actors bizarrely divided into five segments to keep people watching through the week. In many cases, this results in the transmission of one fifth of a monosyllable per morning. It tells you something that the role of roving cultural reporter is held by Jimmy Greaves. It is a morning mixture of snap, popple and (c. G. Ratner) crap.

TV-am is generally presented as an example of the ultimate nightmare curve of an ITV company. High ideals when bidding (remember Peter Jay's "mission to explain"?) are slightly eroded in the opening schedules (remember the "sexual chemistry" between Frost, Ford, Rantzen, Parkinson and Robert Kee?) before a desperate dash for cash, which led, in this case, to the apotheosis of Anne ("Miss Ordinary") Diamond and, now, Mike Morris.

And yet the theory that TV-am's news service is always laughably bad is as partial in its way as the popular myth (Square Eyes *passim*) that Sky News is always terribly good. David Frost's Sunday show — which secures interviews with presidents and prime ministers on a regular basis — is frequently intelligent and Dr Maya Even, who fronted the Gulf coverage, is less of a bimbo than most TV hostesses, although her press officers should stop banging on about her PHD in every available newspaper.

Also the current TV-am, under Bruce Gyngell, is, logically, what the ITV system is always likely to produce for the morning slot. During the rest of the day, the ITV network system of shared costs (between the many regional franchise-holders) for news and expensive programmes raises the overall quality: ie, TVS would never make *World In Action* but it gets to screen it. The morning franchise holder is competing one-to-one against the BBC. To attract advertising, it must claim the highest market share possible.

So what is Fox on about? The evidence suggests that the only way to make a lot of money in the cornflake arena is to have a bimbo-and-bozo double-act reading out endless birthday dedications and introducing Jimmy Greaves. An upmarket hard-news ITV breakfast service might be aesthetically desirable, but it would generate considerably less revenue. Is Sir Paul therefore saying that: 1) Daybreak would earn a lot of kudos but not much return for shareholders; or 2) Daybreak should push the hard-news quality ticket now and then, if successful, respond to particular market conditions; or 3) that he now completely disagrees with the view of his admirer, Margaret Thatcher, that maximum profitability is as important to a television company as to any other company? Now, that's a foxy one.

It might also be time to kill the idea that Sir Paul Fox is the commercial television highbrow, zealously safeguarding quality. Perhaps the ITC might like to note that it was Fox who argued at the BBC for the corporation to screen royal specials and that it was Fox who insisted the BBC must have an early sight of the new Jeffrey Archer manuscript, to assess its potential for adaptation. Perhaps Jimmy Greaves shouldn't fear for his job yet.

'Square Eyes'

"And next in the Banned season — a hosepipe"

MEDIA NEWS

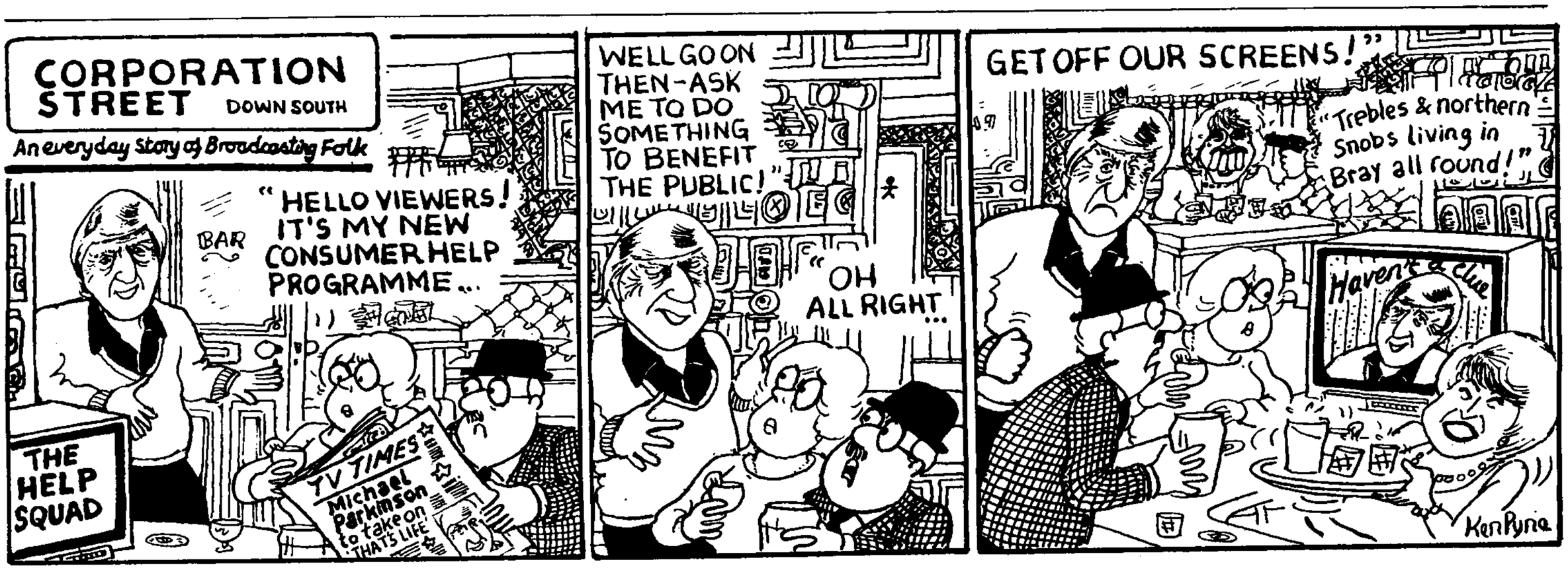
WITH BSkyB's remaining shareholders agreeing to throw more money at promoting the great unwatched, their hopes rest on selling subscriptions to the imaginatively named film channels, Sky Movies Plus and The Movie Channel.

For BSkyB's latest figures to come remotely right, at least two thirds of dish owners must cough up the monthly subscription for one service, with a third buying both. Given the rundown and planned closure of Sky Direct, the sales office located outside Edinburgh which Andrew Neill once confidently predicted would be a huge moneyspinner, and the fact that until recently Sky and the original BSB were rubbishing each others films, this will be no easy task.

Quite whether movie subscriptions have a future at all is debatable: BSkyB is currently threatening to sue most of Hollywood, while hundreds of films can already be rented cheaply on video before they are available on satellite. The satellite operator claims that the major American film companies operated a cartel which pushed up the price for exclusive rights to feature films. This is a convenient explanation for the financial crisis afflicting BSkyB, but hardly a reasonable one.

In their pre-merger period Sky and BSB engaged in a bitter attempt to corner the best movies, forcing prices to unheard of levels. BSB was by far the most profligate, presumably fearing that Rupert Murdoch's ownership of Twentieth Century Fox would lead to Sky receiving favours from its sister company. At the same time, Sky claimed that no such link existed, although strangely, discounted films and programmes are now on offer from Fox to help pay Murdoch's share of BSkyB's relaunch.

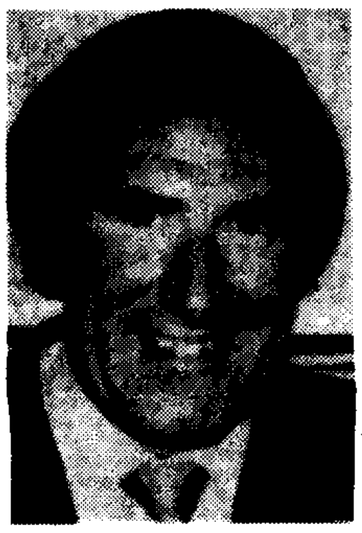
Threats of litigation against studios which did no more than wait for Murdoch and the hilarious Anthony Simmonds-Gooding (gone and all but forgotten) to offer them vast sums of money, are clearly a bluff. Murdoch hopes the studios are so desperate to retain satellite telly as a potential market that they'll cave in and agree to cut the cost of their films. But BSkyB's hopes may yet be unfulfilled, for apart from having a more than reasonable chance of winning in court, the studios may simply decide that there is more money to be made releasing movies exclusively on video than in depending on satellite subscription royalties.


CORPORATION STREET
DOWN SOUTH
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
BAR
"HELLO VIEWERS! IT'S MY NEW CONSUMER HELP PROGRAMME...
THE HELP SQUAD
TV TIMES
Michael Parkinson to take on THAT'S LIFE
WELL GO ON THEN - ASK ME TO DO SOMETHING TO BENEFIT THE PUBLIC!"
"OH ALL RIGHT...
GET OFF OUR SCREENS!"
"Trebles & northern Snobs living in Bray all round!"
Haven't a clue
Ken Pyne

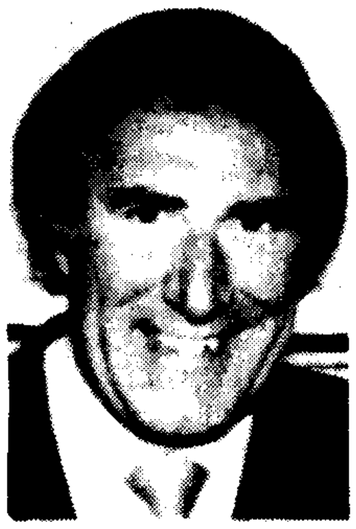
WHEN Sir Paul Fox took over as managing director of television at the BBC he announced: "I have three years to find my successor."

Three years are now up and Foxy has made a startling and inspired choice: Will Wyatt from the next office, who could have had the job all along.

On the subject of inspired choices, John Birt now *seriously* thinks that when Michael Checkland goes as director-general, the name of J. Birt is going to be first out of the hat.



Kneel



Neill

Sir,

I couldn't help noticing the lack of any resemblance between Andrew Neill, who appeared on Channel 4 on 28 April arguing against government censorship of TV and the press, and the Andrew Neill whose newspaper actively participated in the Government's whitewashing of the Gibraltar killings and who appeared on TV advocating the banning of Thames TV's Death On The Rock.

Could they, perhaps, be totally unrelated?

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW ADAMS,
Romford, Essex.

I-SKY / BSB

IT'S excellent news that the BBC and ITV will no longer have a monopoly on Wimbledon tennis.

The cable and satellite stations, like BSkyB, can now bid for exclusive rights to the Wimbledon fortnight, except the finals.

Wimbledon can expect much higher payments. This will provide proper training for British tennis hopefuls.

We might actually get one into a final again.

It'll also means millions equipping themselves with satellite TV.

They'll then watch the satellite news programmes. They'll soon see they don't have the leftie bias of the BBC, ITV and Channel Four.

WOODROW WYATT
News of the World

Goodbye Gazza: I fell in love with you when ***YOU*** *cried in Italy. Now you're making* ***ME*** *cry by going to Italy. Please cry for me on SKY.*

SARAH WILLIAMSON (14)
Sun

Sky wipes out videos

Video stores are being pushed to the brink by stiff competition from satellite movie channels.

More than 1,000 shops face closure in the coming year, according to trade spokesmen.

They say the industry has been caught on the hop by the surge of interest in British Sky Broadcasting.

Today

CONTRIBUTORS: Philip Miller, G. Wood, Vincent Sinclair.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

BIRMINGHAM

BIRMINGHAM, whose bottomless wallet featured in the Tories' recent election broadcast slamming municipal overspenders, has decided to show the world how parsimonious it can be with poll taxpayers' money. It is preparing to spend £150,000 on a mansion in France!

Chateau Brum, as it has become known, is — without a hint of irony — situated in a former lunatic asylum in a national park 20 miles west of Lyons. The city's bizarre plan is to offer accommodation to Brummies working or studying around Lyons. Commuting will be a little difficult as the nearest station is five miles away — so perhaps Birmingham's legendary car pool will be allowed to extend its remit.

The project is being masterminded by Robin Doughty, a senior lecturer at East Birmingham College and a former top official of the lecturers' union, NATFHE. Once the leasing and refurbishment is finished, he will have the unenviable task of staying on in Burgundy, the gastronomic centre of the universe, in what will surely be one of the most unpleasant council offices in the world.

Coincidentally, several senior Labour councillors on the education committee responsible for sending him there are also NATFHE members.

The annual rental of £16,000 is just for openers. Refurbishment will cost Brum's poll tax payers around £30,000, with another £50,000 for staff and an unspecified amount for flying staff and students to and from Lyon.

Most worrying of all is education committee chairman Les Byron's plan to open similar trading posts in every major country in Europe. Can Schloss Brum and the Crossroads-in-Chianti Castellina be far away?

MANCHESTER

THE city's desperate housing crisis recently outlined in the *Eye* is spawning new levels of deception and ingenuity.

With thousands of impoverished private tenants sandwiched between the landlords' desire to maximise profits and the town hall's need to minimise housing benefit handouts, local dirt-diggers have found some landlords raking in the rent money by claiming for tenants who do not exist.

City council housing wallahs believe the neo-Rachmans could be netting as much as £4 million a year — either by inventing residents and faking details or by placing willing relatives into their properties who then pose as unemployed, "problem" families. The landlords then charge fellow conspirators a small fortune to live in the property and touch the authorities for the bill. Yet often the property in question is empty.

Astute landlords are by-passing the middleman and using themselves as the "tenant", while not-so-astute landlords are currently helping Inspector Knacker with his inquiries into this shameless racket.

The shock findings came to light in April when Manchester town hall officers discovered that 22 per cent of privately-rented homes were not being inhabited by the designated tenant. Yet in nearly every case the steep rents, often as much as £500 a week, were being paid directly to the landlord.

City treasurers claim in mitigation it would be impossible to check every housing benefit application, thereby providing Manchester's fraudulent element with carte blanche to fix the forms and join the thriving rent game.

The city's response has been to slash the amount of rent it is willing to pay *all* tenants through the housing benefit system, thus causing much misery for the majority of "real" impoverished tenants renting from law-abiding landlords.

STAFFORDSHIRE

ONLY TWO months before the costly independent inquiry into Staffordshire County Council's brutal "pin-down" system of controlling children in care is unveiled (see *Eyes passim*), interested parties are making contingency plans.

One youngster allegedly subjected to the council's Victorian-style disciplinary experiments, which included solitary, semi-naked confinement, is taking legal action against the authority. Eighteen-year-old Andrew Mills, who was in care at the Hartshill Road home in Newcastle-under-Lyme, has issued a writ against the council demanding compensation which could run into thousands of pounds.

The independent inquiry into pin-down has already run up a bill of more than £700,000 for the potteries' hard-pressed charge-payers. As a charge payer himself, though, the financial plight of the authority's Labour chairman John O'Leary will be eased by the recent 26 per cent increase in his annual council allowance to £10,000 a year.

The findings of the independent inquiry, now being prepared by Cleveland inquiry barrister Allan Levy, will be a stern early test for Staffordshire's new social services director Christine Walby, appointed last March after previous incumbent Barry O' Neill had taken early retirement following a period of "immense strain".

Yet council critics wonder if the authority has learnt anything from the five-year controversy over pin-down. Many of its victims, now out of care, are being refused counselling by the town hall on the grounds that such help would imply shortcomings in the policy.

Meanwhile, following a nine-month inquiry by Inspector Knacker of the Staffordshire Constabulary into an alleged local vice ring arising from the pin-down chaos, the Crown Prosecution Service has surprisingly found no ground for prosecution. One former Labour councillor is, however, already serving time for sexually abusing young boys procured with ease due to his town hall status from the Riverside council home in Stoke.

SHEPWAY

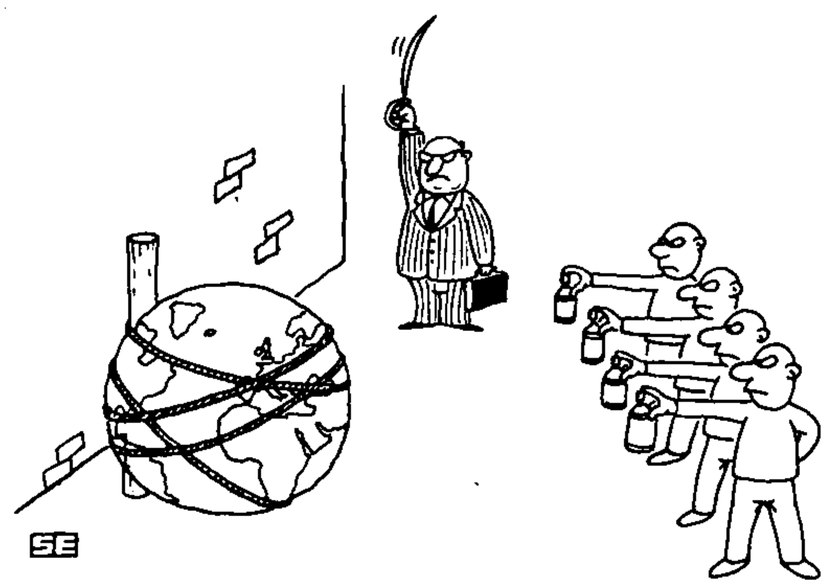
AVIATION buffs and heritage campaigners are trying to save a rare and unspoilt Battle of Britain airfield, Hawkinge in Kent, from redevelopment into a humdrum industrial estate.

Just over 50 years ago England's finest scrambled across Hawkinge's flat green fields and into their Spitfires. The RAF finally moved out in 1961 and three years later sold the buildings on the site to Kent County Council and Shepway District Council.

Soon after, Hawkinge was revisited by dashing airmen for the making of Guy Hamilton's reverent Battle of Britain film. When they left the area was farmed. In 1985 an aviation company, Mission Flying Services, applied for a five-year lease to re-open Hawkinge as a commercial airport. However, the close proximity of two other airports, at RAF Manston and on Romney Marsh, and the absurdly short tenure made locals suspect it as a ploy to make the airfield "ripe for developers", even though Shepway council insisted it would oppose any development plans.

Sure enough, in 1989 plans were announced to turn Hawkinge into a housing-cum-industrial estate with 1,200 dwellings. Traditional Kentish men opposed to the plans formed the Save Hawkinge Airfield Group and lobbied the then Tory-controlled Shepway council (the Liberal Democrats took control recently) against the proposals on the grounds that the site, the last extant airfield used in the battle, should be preserved as a national monument to complement the nearby Kent Battle of Britain Museum.

Although the group's opposition forced a public inquiry, approval was eventually given for both housing and industrial plots, but not before the remains of a number of World War II airmen had been found. The campaigners are now claiming that as a war grave Hawkinge should be inviolate. They have collected a 20,000-signature petition, 250 letters from former pilots and enlisted the support of Michael Bentine, a former British intelligence officer, and Michael Caine, a star of the film. Not many people know that.



DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'Old Muckspreader'

WHEN Old Muck saw Tessa Strickland, the fragrant Random House editor, and "Sir" Richard Body MP cooing together in a Bloomsbury restaurant, he predicted another dreary book on poisoned farming would soon emerge. And, lo and behold, *Our Food, Our Land* **duly arrives on my desk.**

It is the usual predictable inventory of nonsense about how the bureaucrats are ruining the countryside, degrading the soil and screwing up international trade in the service of more expensive groceries.

I showed my copy to a Min of Ag official to see how he regarded the Bodovian tales of intrigue and folly in Mr Gummer's craven empire. "Everything we do is in the best interests of the country. We try to be positive about the opportunities and the challenges ahead." Body's parliamentary colleague Robert Jackson added that everything Body writes has a "pervasive lack of contact with reality. He is a pain in the neck."

The only consolation in this book which will be instantly remaindered is that Random House has presciently printed it on specially bio-degradable paper.

THE Conservative Research Department is meant to be the new centre of creative thinking in the Conservative Party. And an internal party minute which captures the creative thinking behind Tory cynicism about our green and pleasant land has fallen into Old Muck's horny hands.

"We must give no hostages to the free trade, anti-Community lobbies. References to the former Prime Minister's Bruges speech and Aspen speech ought to be omitted from briefs.

"The Green coalitions can be countered with talks of more funds for the National Parks, woodland projects and set aside schemes. It is essential that the National Farmers Union, Country Landowners and other rural bodies should not be disaffected from the party before the election."

JOHN MAJOR'S bureaucrats seem even more petty and spiteful than his predecessor's, judging by these two tales about the fatuous powers exercised under the new food act.

Mrs Ann Brocklehurst, of Huntly, in Aberdeenshire, was one of Scotland's champion makers of fine cheeses. She has carried off most of the international prizes at food exhibitions. The prestigious Scottish Gourmet sells her subtly flavoured dairy produce; she has never had a hint of criticism of her soft cheese; and Asda, who were buyers, had never faulted her cheeses in their own exacting lab tests.

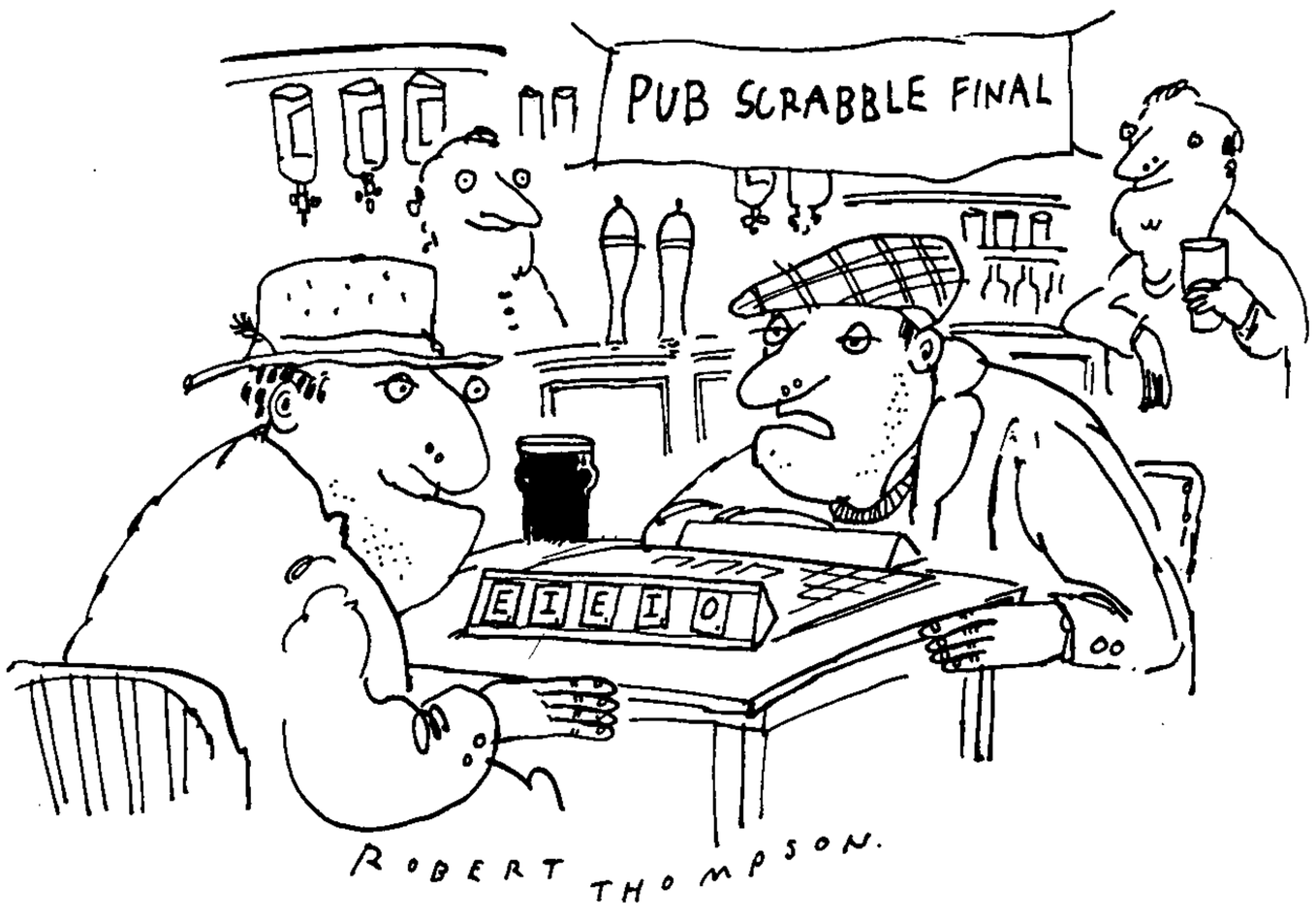
But Mrs Brocklehurst has now closed her operation after being told she must replace all her wooden goat troughs with Euro-specified metal ones, and after she was warned that there was a danger spiders could get into her barn... not her dairy. The costs of complying with these loopy directions was beyond her patience as much as her pocket. The men from the ministry failed to show what lab tests she may or may not have failed. No independent verification or appeal can be sought.

Iain Smedley has reared pheasants and guinea fowl for smoking and other game products on his 50-acre farm in Argyll for 20 years. He has never had a complaint or a suggestion of food poisoning. He sells his specialist pheasant products as he was exhorted to abandon sheep rearing. Now the inspectors have insisted he tile and polish the floors of his pens and that he scrap all his product labels replacing the plain description "contents" with the Euro-demanded "Ingredients". These pointless interventions have turned profit into loss and have nothing remotely to do with food hygiene.

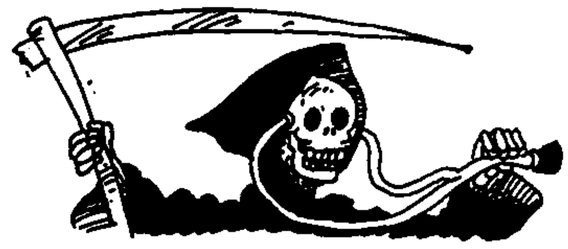
It is encouraging to note that appeals from fellow MPs against these ant-capitalist conspiracies evoked only yawns from Scottish Secretary Ian Lang and Food supremo "Sir" David Maclean.

THE Great Bustard Trust has successfully reintroduced the enchanting and comical Otis tarda to Britain and our biggest native bird is prospering quietly in several farmer-free zones.

Now a group of guerilla ecologists are switching from expanding the range of the Great Bustard to reintroducing the wild boar, arguing that Nature evolved the wild pig to take on the NFU. It is almost immune to the poisoned plants and soils of the NFU and rather smarter than most MPs. Can the Wild Boar Trust be far away?



"Don't tell me, Old Macdonald, you've got all the vowels"



HEALTH LATEST

HUGE job cuts at Guy's and Lewisham hospitals, recently made "self-governing trusts", will send a shiver through the north of Scotland where hospital managers are about to apply for "trust status" for the region's main hospital, Aberdeen's Royal Infirmary (ARI).

Consultants there have overwhelmingly rejected the idea — the last ballot was 87-2 against — and the move is regarded with suspicion and hostility throughout the area. But this has made no difference to the determination of management to apply. This bloodymindedness does not surprise any of those involved in the tussle. Pleasing Scotland's deeply unpopular health minister, former ad-man Michael Forsyth, appears to be the prime motivation of most of those (very few) who support a move that will catapult the hitherto efficient and advanced hospital into the care of a "self-governing" trust, the details of whose operation are obscure and, in the light of news from the south, ominous.

James Kyle, Grampian health board's chairman and an ARI surgeon, strongly favours the move and has used the local press to attack opponents to it. A gimlet-eyed Ulsterman, Mr Kyle is a recent political appointee famous for two things: having devoted huge amounts of time over the years to attending British Medical Association meetings in London; and his vibrant views on AIDS. When AIDS came to wide public notice in late 1986 he wrote that the blood transfusion service would be protected against the dangers of the disease if only "the pure and sinless" were to donate blood.

Once the opting out application is made, there will be three months "consultation", though with whom no one knows as there is no formal mechanism for anyone to be consulted. It is widely feared that whatever the staff, patients and the people of Aberdeen feel, the move will go ahead anyway.

So which brilliant medical mind will head the unwanted new "trust" when it is foist upon Aberdeen? Mr Brian Broomfield, a hitherto unknown car salesman.

FOOTBALL NEWS

SHEFFIELD Wednesday, fresh from Rumbelows league cup final victory and bound for division one next season, show no signs of relenting on what is probably the most odious ground admission policy in the football league.

The club's shameful attitude dates from the tragedy in April 1989 at its Hillsborough stadium, which claimed the lives of 95 Liverpool supporters. In the immediate aftermath Wednesday decided to close the ill-fated Leppings Lane terrace, mumbling platitudes about respect for the dead. When the club drew local rivals Sheffield United in a cup match the following season, however, "respect" was quickly forgotten as Wednesday saw the chance to cash-in. A sizeable portion of the standing area was quickly refurbished and more than 4,000 United fans were accommodated in comfort.

This surprised no one, since it was the so-called "safety" fences and the inadequacy of monitoring mechanisms which had claimed supporters' lives, rather than the terracing per se. Yet immediately after the United match, Wednesday again closed the terrace, once more forcing all visiting fans to use seats.

In view of the tragedy, most away supporters accepted this decision with grim fortitude while noting that Wednesday's aversion to standing areas did not extend to their own fans, who remained free to use the massive Kop end.

Thus it is that Wednesday charge their hapless "guests" the full £8 for a Leppings Lane seat, while warning that any away supporter who tries entering the considerably cheaper "home" terrace faces arrest.

This policy makes Hillsborough the most expensive "away" ground outside the first division, and Wednesday do not even offer the standard concession to OAPs or juveniles. Wednesday's approach has more to do with money than memorials and threatens football's much-vaunted pursuit of the so-called "family audience".

LIBEL NEWS

THERE are growing signs that sanity may be returning to the mad world of libel law now that Mr Justice Drake has taken over the main responsibility for libel cases, replacing — to everyone's relief — the former regime of judges like Mr Justice "Witty" Davies and Mr Justice "Fragrant" Caulfield.

For a start, there is the embarrassment suffered in two recent cases by the Police Federation. Like so many "professional organisations", the federation has in recent times been swift to instruct its solicitors, Russell, Jones and Walker of Gray's Inn Road, to issue writs at every conceivable suggestion of a libel against any one of its members. Since juries tend to support police officers against the gutter press, this practice has been money for old rope.

But they were made to think again by the case of the Chudleigh Riot. The *Sunday People* had had the gall to brand two Devon PCs, Baker and Williams, as "cowards and liars" because they had refused to intervene while several of their colleagues were beaten senseless by a gang of Dartmoor lager louts. Needless to say, this attack on the PCs was, for Russell, Jones and Walker and the Police Federation, a quite intolerable slur and the usual libel action followed.

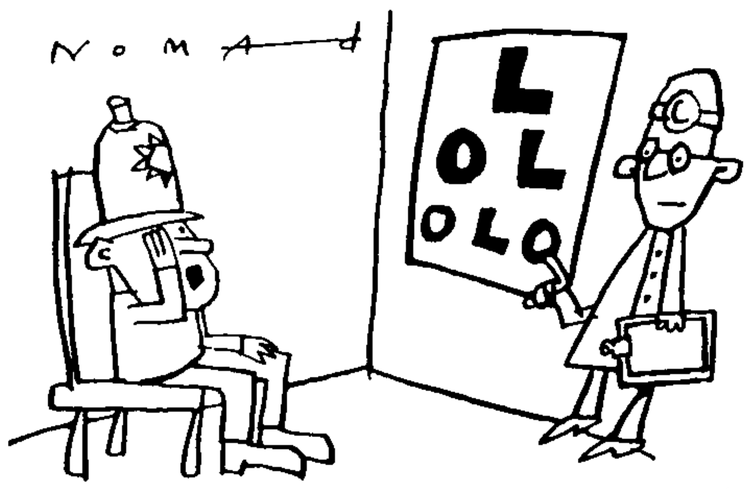
The case lasted nine days in the high court with George Carman appearing for the *People* and Charles Gray for the police. These are the two most expensive libel lawyers for hire today. The *People*'s defence was that the description of the two officers as cowards and liars was utterly justifiable.

Several police officers gave evidence in the case, but only two spoke up for the plaintiffs: the two officers themselves. All the other officers told a tale not unlike that told by the *People*.

The jury found for the *People* and the Police Federation was ordered to pay its own costs and those of the *People*. Russell, Jones and Walker put out a statement that the costs would probably be not more than £66,000; an estimate which has had to be revised on receipt of the fee for George Carman alone, believed to be not a million pounds short of £100,000.

This, it was thought, might shut the Police Federation up tight, but before long it was bouncing back in the amazing case of PC Barry Bawden. The *News of the World* had settled its action with the federation over PC Bawden; but Patsy Chapman, the paper's new editor, didn't see why she should apologise for a libel published before she was editor. So, she put in her apology that the libel had been committed under a previous editor.

Quick as a flash, Russell, Jones and Walker were firing off a letter saying that the proviso had caused their client "great distress". They sued the *News of the World*, claiming enormous damages for breach of contract. The paper paid £100 into court. On rolled the case in the high court, with two other expensive counsel (Desmond Browne for the paper; Philip Vallance for the police) plus juniors. When Mr Bawden went into the witness box, Desmond Browne asked him how he had felt when he had read the qualified apology. "I was elated," beamed the greatly distressed policeman. From there on it was all downhill for the Police Federation, and Mr Justice Hobhouse eventually awarded them the sum of "forty shillings" damages. The Police Federation will have to pay most of the costs estimated at the standard rate for one and a half days — about £16,000.



POLICE 5

LORD DENNING and distinguished colleagues should not be completely dispirited by the release of the Birmingham Six. Denning's infamous "appalling vista" judgement has found favour with at least one influential figure — Charles Haughey.

The Irish government is citing Lord Denning's decision in the Birmingham case in an attempt to block similar actions in the Dublin courts. Since the outbreak of the Troubles, the republic's police, the Garda Siochana, have been dogged with often well-founded allegations of brutality and abuse of procedure. The ability of a group within the Gardai's central detective unit, widely referred to as the Heavy Gang, to obtain convictions based on uncorroborated confessions, led to repeated complaints.

The farcical Kerry Babies case in which an entire family signed confessions to an infanticide which had never taken place, was only the most obvious example of routine malpractice. And the decision of a subsequent official tribunal to let things lie did nothing to inspire confidence in the fair treatment of suspects.

Many officers involved in the Kerry case were also responsible for investigating so called "subversive" offences. A fear of the Troubles spreading south has long haunted politicians and the Gardai have customarily been given a free hand in keeping potential troublemakers under control. Until very recently those campaigning for prisoners (or seen talking to dangerous lunatics like Chris Mullin, for example) could expect regular encounters with the local special branch.

One man who definitely fell foul of the Gardai was Nicky Kelly, a member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the legal political wing of the paramilitary Irish National Liberation Army. He was jailed for his involvement in a mail train robbery in Co Kildare, near Dublin. Following expressions of concern from groups including Amnesty International and a campaign which saw slogans demanding his release plastered on any available wall space in the republic, he was freed by Garret Fitzgerald's administration.

Since then Mr Kelly has been attempting to sue his government for compensation for the assaults he claims led to him signing the confession used to obtain his conviction. Although the authorities effectively conceded his claims by ordering his release from the maximum security Portlaoise prison, no official admission has ever been made. Repeated attempts to challenge the government in the courts have been blocked by the "appalling vista" judgement. The fact that the Denning precedent has now been discredited is unlikely to persuade the Irish authorities to allow Mr Kelly's hearing to proceed.

In a touching display of faith, Mr Kelly is now attempting to persuade British politicians to raise his case under the terms of the Anglo-Irish agreement. This neat reversal of Dublin's use of the Maryfield secretariat to query the actions of the West Midlands police would, however, require a genuine commitment to the fair administration of justice. With few honorable exceptions, that has not been a notable feature of either legislature.

JUDGING by his performance at a recent press conference, West Midlands chief constable Ron Hadfield is a desperate man.

Trying to produce something more newsworthy than the Birmingham Six, his disbanded serious crimes squad or the Gail Kinchin inquiry, he launched a tirade against Birmingham's (nonexistent) drugs barons who, he said, were about to wreak carnage across the West Midlands.

The loud silence at the end of this attempted diversion was broken by a fragrant teenage hackette from BRMB, the local radio station, who demanded to know if he had any apology for the Birmingham Six or the SCS's victims.

Hadfield went pink with fury and said he had no apology to make to anyone, however long they had spent in jail. Seconds later he closed the press conference and walked out.

INTELLIGENCE

THE EXPOSE last month by *Channel Four News* of the British intelligence "failure" that led to more than 400 British Airways passengers and two crews on flight BA149 to Kuwait becoming Saddam Hussein's "guests" left many stones unturned.

Returning hostages had little praise for British embassy staff in Kuwait, whose volunteer "warden" system broke down before it even started.

Many complained that their calls to the embassy in the early days of the Iraqi invasion were met with a recorded message informing them either that the embassy was closed or to sit tight and keep their heads down. Some believe that swift action by the embassy in the first three days, when the Iraqis were less concerned with taking hostages, could have enabled hundreds to escape to safety over the Saudi border.

Instead ex-pats were advised not to risk the short journey. Those who headed for the border later, when Iraqi security was hotter than the desert sun, took risks which early evacuation would have avoided.

Ever since the "unexpected" invasion of 2 August — the CIA had predicted it and most normal souls had worked it out for themselves as Iraqi troops massed on the Kuwaiti border — HMG has insisted that it learned the worst too late to be able to turn back the BA jumbo or to spur on those willing to make a run for it.

Yet wardens tell of a briefing given at the embassy on Tuesday 31 July by MoD adviser Bruce Duncan. They learned that warnings of an imminent invasion had been issued at the US embassy the previous night and were told to stock up on water and check over lists of known British ex-pats in the tiny state. These computer print-outs, revised every January, were hopelessly out of date. Some ex-pats received telephone calls from relatives in Britain the night before the invasion, begging them to leave, after reports of the military build up emerged once the Iraq-Kuwait talks in Baghdad had broken down.

What really staggered ex-pats and wardens alike was that the embassy did not alert them to the invasion as it was happening. Airborne Iraqi troops had descended on the emir's Dasman Palace, 500 metres from the embassy building, in the early hours of 2 August. The Iraqis were in control of the defence ministry on the outskirts of the city by 4am. By that time, the emir had crossed the Saudi border and at least 15 private jets were seen heading out of the country hours earlier.

Internal communications, meanwhile, were still in operation.

A diplomatic silence surrounds reports that ambassadors and senior attachés met in the small wee hours of 2 August to discuss whether or not to organise a mass evacuation and erred on the side of caution. Perhaps they had heard the reports of unidentified troops roaming about on the beaches late the night before.

Unfortunately, many of those who have such tales to tell also have livelihoods to protect. Some have been offered inflated salaries to return to Kuwait to help the ruthless royals restore the country's failing infrastructure. Others have contracts with major companies whose best interests are served by not rocking the boat.

FERRY UPDATE

MORE news of Sealink's Fantasia, the wonderferry. The Sealink rag *Strait Talking* reveals some interesting figures for the ferry's "reliability and punctuality".

The proportion of the programmed trips actually performed by the Fantasia, for the three months to March, was just 67.5 per cent. But that dismal figure was outdone by the one for punctuality: the percentage of trips "departing on time" was given as 47.

Sally Deedes

GREEDY British Telecom, recently thwarted in its sly attempt to backdate the Government's increase in VAT, has found another way to increase profits: paying slave labour wages to those who distribute its 1991 directories.

The unemployed, pensioners and others desperate to earn a few extra pounds have found their reward for such toil can amount to little more than £1.00 an hour.

Paul Spain plc of Wokingham, Berkshire, is one of two distribution firms used by BT. The company recruits through the local press and applicants, particularly those in rural areas, must have a car and access to a phone. Individual distributors are coordinated by a group leader, also employed on a freelance basis, and each distributor is asked to deliver between 500 and 600 directories. The fee for this work is around £45, paid to the individual some weeks after the deliveries are made. No mileage or petrol allowance is paid and nor, more importantly, does the company offer any personal insurance (one distributor was attacked by three dogs on his round).

A strict contract has to be signed which can even result in money being deducted from the meagre wage. The last three clauses of the contract read: "£2.00 could be deducted from each customer who complains that books were left unnecessarily exposed to passers-by"; "£1.00 for every nylon strap found uncut in the back of a contractors vehicle"; and finally the distributor must agree to "offer Paul Spain a discount of 5 percent on any deliveries made in excess of 1500 on any one delivery".

One young man in the Yarmouth area of the Isle of Wight was offered £45 to deliver 654 books — 7.3p per "drop". His patch, however, was rural and involved long drives down rough country roads. In some cases he had to deliver on foot. Customers' names and addresses were not given in house or street order and this caused considerable back-tracking to cover all the houses listed in accordance with the contract. This particular operation took 27 working hours — not including the initial instruction period of two hours and the round trip to collect the directories in the first place. The petrol cost £15.00 and his pay, after this deduction, amounted to £33.00 — around £1.13 an hour.

A pensioner who was delivering within a village was quoted £45.00 to deliver 561 books. Two or three weeks later he received only £37.00. Questions to his co-ordinator about the discrepancy are still unanswered.

When I spoke to him, an edgy Mr Spain refused to give details of rates of pay. "There are many, many variables, and how we allocate pay is entirely at our discretion."

THE TV Licence Office (TVLO) is nothing if not diligent in its efforts to collect revenue.

In one instance a bank returned to it a direct debit payment request, advising the TVLO that this particular client had died. Days later a letter came back: "A direct debit payment request for £17.75 has been returned by the above named persons' bank endorsed Deceased. This was an agreement signed by this person to pay for a television licence by direct debit. A licence has already been issued under this agreement. Should you not wish to continue payment by this method please return the licence to us for amendment."

FOR YEARS cyclists have suffered at the hands of British Rail.

You can stick bikes on some trains at any time for free; some never carry bikes; some carry them until 12 noon; on some you have to pay and book in advance in person at the station. Then there is always the risk that anything you have been told by BR will be ignored by the jobsworth guard on the train.

It might have been thought that BR was offering an olive branch when it announced that it would celebrate the fifth anniversary of Tiverton Parkway station by supporting a sponsored bike ride from the station in aid of the British Heart Foundation. But not a bit of it.

Coaches, it promised, would be laid on to bring cyclists and their machines from Swindon, Bristol, Bath and Plymouth. Alas the coaches were not the sort pulled by locomotives but the kind that travel by road — a smart move if you want to persuade the public on to your trains.

BR could end up with even more egg on its face over the prizes for those who raise most money. The prizes are vouchers for rail travel and one of the awards is for teams of six. If they all want to travel on one of the new sprinter trains, they'll have a job: only the first two bikes to arrive are accepted.

Sporting Life

THAT CRAFTY Italian-born trainer "Lightbulb Luca" Cumani has been venting his frustration over the tame performance of his Derby hope Suomi at Sandown on 26 April by laying into the Newmarket gallops watchers and trade paper correspondents.

He seems to think they were responsible for Suomi's defeat, having allegedly over-hyped the horse and misled the public about its potential ability. The spectacle of one of the greatest Slyboots in racing, who has seen fit to enter Suomi in nine Group One contests and whose yard are hardly averse to a wager, protesting about other people misleading the punters is a rich one.

Cumani has perfected the art of winning major second season pattern and handicap races with "dark" or late developing horses and can hardly complain that the hacks now try to second-guess his intentions at the start of each year.

Some so-called work watchers are no closer to the horse's mouth than Pat Eddery's chauffeur's brother's newsagent, but most hacks are simply trying to give the put-upon betting community some ideas about which horses are progressing and at what rate. If the punters had more hard racetrack evidence to go on, as in the era of Mill Reef and Sir Ivor, there'd be less need to play Find the Lady.

But Cumani and some of his Newmarket neighbours tend to bypass most of the established two-year-old races, especially with their juvenile colts, the best of which are likely to run just the once in a maiden race — maybe at Newmarket, but often on an obscure card at Nottingham or Leicester, as in Suomi's case up at Newcastle. When Cumani or the equally cagey Michael Stoute are asked about these horses they give away little more than name, rank and serial number.

This absurd secrecy is one of the most pathetic aspects of British racing and contrasts markedly with the United States where press interest is seen as good for the sport. The leading fancies for the Triple Crown and Breeders' Cup races work openly on the track every morning and afterwards the trainers by and large give a straight answer to a straight question.

"Lightbulb Luca" has recently made public appearances on a TV documentary and on a panel of racing "experts", each occasion being devoted to an examination of the arguably equally hyped-up crisis facing the British Turf. "Filthy" didn't hesitate to ask for more money — by which he means prize money. Under present arrangements, racing's biggest hand-out comes from the oft-maligned betting shop community via the betting levy. Yet "Filthy" apparently wants to deny them even the harmless excitement of a gallops report.

The charitable assessment of Cumani's behaviour is that he's a little sensitive about his rather low-key start to the season. He had two other fancied runners turned over on 26 April. One of them started odds-on but didn't even make the first three in a tiny maiden race at Carlisle. If that horse or Suomi wins a decent prize later in the season, everyone will congratulate the trainer for his skill. In the meantime the despised punters, too ignorant to understand what happens on the gallops, must continue trying to distinguish the three of spades from the ace.

'Major Bonkers'

Letters

Scud missive attack

Sir,

If your regular item "Letter from Israel" is meant to be one of those we should take seriously, it fails for the simple reason that it is full of mistakes.

No Arabs were expelled from the country in 1948. Thousands, however, fled in the expectation of being able to return after a short time in the wake of conquering Arab armies. In 1967, Israel acquired the territories after being attacked by her neighbours, and today administers those lands under international law until such time as there is peace in the region.

Israel has not reneged on any agreements. The peace with Egypt is a good and lasting one. It was secured in part by Israel giving back 91 percent of the land acquired in the 1967 war.

People in the territories were put under curfew during the Gulf War because they supported the enemy of Israel, and the enemy of Britain I might add. Palestinians danced on their roofs and cheered as Scud missiles hurtled towards Israel's population centres.

To say Israel needs land for settlements is incorrect. As a democracy, and in keeping with international law, people can settle anywhere they like in territory administered by their country. No established populations have been displaced, and no prior sovereignty has been disrupted. It was Jordan's King Abdullah who violated the 1949 Rhodes Armistice Agreements and illegally annexed territory whose disposition had not been agreed upon.

During 1990, 200,000 Soviet Jews went to live in Israel because that was their only safe haven in the world. Likewise, the Jews who remain in Ethiopia are hopeful of joining their families in Israel. The entire Jewish community of Albania was successfully airlifted to Israel while their country underwent disintegration and violence recently.

Israel is responsible for creating a great many things in the territories, but by no definition can they be linked with what your correspondent calls "the only non-Arab dictatorship in the Middle East".

Finally, your correspondent may well ask why before 1967 there was no freedom in these territories, nor as far as anyone can determine, any well-defined Palestinian nationalism.

Yours sincerely,
BURT KEIMACH,

Deputy Director, Britain/Israel Public Affairs Centre.

"You OK there, Sid?"

O.B.N.

Sir, My colleague, Alistair Burt, MP (April 15), is quite right to express concern about disunity in the Conservative Party. We are talking ourselves into a quite unnecessary corner.

The new PM is notably a lot more popular than the rest of us in the Tory party. Who knows? Perhaps a thoughtful approach to the confusing problems of the 1990s, a firm belief in consultation and a courteous manner are genuinely appreciated by the British public. There's a lesson there for all of us, commentators and critics alike.

EDWINA CURRIE
Letter in The Times

Submitted by Amanda Baker.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

Baton charge

Sir,

Your revelations concerning the managerial efficiency of the London College of Music are hardly newsworthy, yet your attack on its ALCM diploma is totally unjustified. The diploma may not be the highest of musical accolades, but it is not awarded to external candidates for playing God Save the Queen with one finger. External examiners set a very high standard for performance and each candidate receives an in-depth criticism of his or her keyboard work.

The diploma has the merit of encouraging youngsters to aim for higher awards; it is a stepping stone in the right direction, without which many late developers of musical talent would fall by the wayside and abandon their efforts to achieve noteworthy musicianship.

I speak as a parent of one such, who, some years ago, was awarded the ALCM and is now a full-time music student at a university, the entry to whose department of music is perhaps the most fiercely competitive in the country.

Yours faithfully,
R S GREENHALGH,

Trefriw, Gwynedd.

Song cycle

Sir,

I was most upset by Lunchtime O'Boulez's article on the London College of Music, when aspersions were cast on the credibility of their diploma, by comparing it with a cycling proficiency certificate. As you may have deduced, I am one of those people who cherish their framed diploma bearing the famous Lloyd-Weber mark.

However, on discussing the article with my husband, it transpired that he has even more reason to be upset as he is the proud owner of a cycling proficiency certificate (complete with lapel badge).

Perhaps your readers may advise me whether it is my husband or myself who should be the one to refuse to renew our joint subscription?

Yours faithfully,
GERALDINE O'DONNELL
ALCM(!),

Irvine, Ayrshire.

Overture and over there

Sir,

Mr Andrew Perry names Sir Michael Tippett and Richard Rodney Bennett as senior officials at the London College of Music (Eye 766).

Since Richard Rodney Bennett lives in the US, and 86-year-old Sir Michael Tippett spends much of his time there, how much time can either spare for day-to-day duties at the college?

Yours faithfully,
GORDON JACKSON,

Oldham.

Classical gas

Sir,

May I support Andrew Perry's letter (Eye 766) citing John McCabe as a well-known figure in classical music?

I have played various McCabe compositions including Piano Concerto No 1 with the great man as soloist.

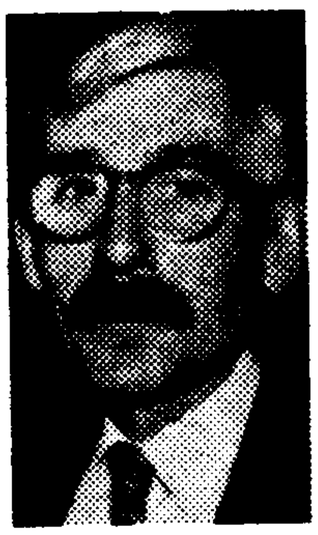
Yes, John McCabe is well known — as a bloody awful composer.

I had that Edward Elgar on my music stand once...

Yours faithfully,
EUGENE SMITH,

Bedford.

Lookalike



Armstrong

Roy Strong

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the startling resemblance between former V&A museum director Sir Roy Strong, and "Emmerdale" character Seth Armstrong? Perhaps they are related?

Yours faithfully,
TONY MARTIN,

London SE15.

Rocky VIs and VIIs

Sir,

The renewed controversy over the programme Death on the Rock has lost sight of the fact that Kenneth Asquez made two identical, and voluntary, statements about what he saw (with Mr Terence Poulson and his girl friend) from a car in Corral Road on 6 March 1988.

The first was to Major Robert Randall on 7 March, the day after the shootings when, one would imagine, Mr Asquez's memory would be very fresh and accurate. Three weeks later, Mr Asquez repeated the same statement to Mr Finch, again quite voluntarily. It was only at the inquest several months later that Mr Asquez suddenly became "confused" and "vague" and could not remember how he had come by the facts in his original statement.

One way of testing Mr Asquez's statement would have been to have Mr Poulson give evidence at the inquest. Unfortunately, this was not done, perhaps because Mr Poulson's father was a member of the Gibraltar police. In fact, everything suggests Mr Asquez was telling the truth in his first statement because it contained specific details not known anywhere else at the time.

But the most interesting facet of this affair, that still remains unanswered, is how the IRA quartet got their Semtex. At the time, it was claimed the Semtex had been taken off the Eskund and smuggled ashore at Puerto Banus, although the Spanish police always denied this. But during the recent trial in France of the Eskund's crew, no mention was ever made of their having done this. However, in November 1988, a number of senior Spanish police officers were charged with supplying guns and explosives to the Basque terrorist movement ETA. One wonders, therefore, if the Semtex was not supplied in a sting-operation by MI5 with the help of the Spanish police.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES RUSBRIDGER,

Bodmin, Cornwall.

Junk mail

Sir,

A longstanding French friend of mine, living and working in Peru, phoned me up last week asking me to arrange a subscription to THE EUROPEAN. *What should I do?*

Yours sincerely,
TED BOWDEN,

Hove, East Sussex.

Slagged off

Sir,

You suggest (Street of Shame, 766) that it was wrong for a DAILY EXPRESS *sub-editor to change the first word of the Chaucerian phrase "parfit, gentle knight" in Jean Rook's copy to "perfect". Not really. Chaucer's own phrase, in the prologue to* THE CANTERBURY TALES, *is "a verray parfit gentil knight". A careful writer or sub-editor either keeps all the original spelling and punctuation or else modernises all of it; a careless writer or sub-editor changes some of it, with a result that is neither one thing nor the other. If Jean Rook made such a mistake, she shouldn't complain about what someone else did to it.*

Yours pedantically,
NICOLAS WALTER,

London N1.

Rugger bugger

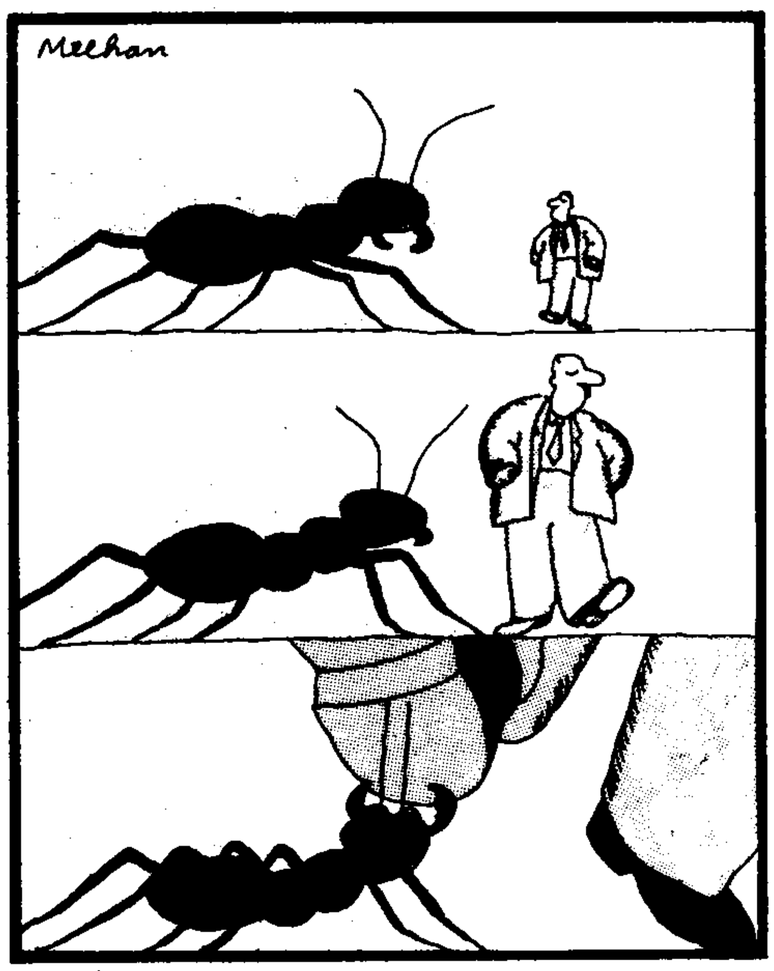
Sir,

I am honoured that you have at last recognised my rugby career in your issue of 26 April. I seem to make friends very quickly. On the basis of your article your correspondent is as good a friend as Mr Edwin Schoon, Buckinghamshire County Planning Officer, I have met them both once.

I played rugby once against Oliver Reed, so that should give me a pretty fast track to becoming a film star. But in view of the vivid imagination displayed in your article, I thought you might be interested in some of the people I would like to have played with — like the Pope, who would assure me of my place in the great gravel pit in the sky, which, if all I read about myself is true, must be in some doubt, and Marilyn Monroe, who had as much experience — at rugby — as John Naylor, Berkshire's County Hydrologist. I would have been very happy to bath with Marilyn in the water found in the "contaminated" tip after the game, but I would prefer champagne, like the champagne I will drink with my staff when we have won the appeals at Hurst and Burnham.

Yours sincerely,
PETER H PRIOR,

Managing Director, Summerleaze Ltd.



BY THE TIME THE ANT UNDERSTOOD THE RU[illegible] OF PERSPECTIVE, IT WAS TOO L[illegible]

I-SPY *Matchbox*

MARATHON MAJOR

The best in the long run

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Submitted by M. Griffiths. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Retch for the Sky

Sir,

In your I-Sky/BSB slot in issue 766 you quote from a piece in THE TIMES *by Nicholas Watt. Knowing your reputation for even-handedness, I am sure you won't mind me pointing out that Sky did, after all, have the pictures exclusively. In just the same way, in issues of* THE TIMES *the previous week, Mr Watt gave ITN the deserved credit for two other Gulf exclusives.*

Yours sincerely,
PETER ROBERTS,

Managing Director, The Times.

Geography lesson

Sir,

I'm hardly surprised that Allerdale's Timeshare centre in Keswick failed, if your article "Hotel du Laclustre" (Eye 765) is correct.

You state that the then Labour council built the pool and 1,000 time share homes in an isolated spot on the edge of Kendal. As Kendal is on the other side of the Lake District in South Lakeland, I'm not surprised the district auditor intervened. However, the centre would have had no effect on the local hotel trade whilst the pool would have been no benefit to the people of Keswick when it was open. Either the councillors' knowledge of geography is appalling or your article contains errors. As you describe Allerdale as being nuclear-ridden when it is neighbouring Copeland that contains Sellafield and Barrow at the southern edge of the Lake District that contains VSEL where Trident submarines are being built, perhaps it is your knowledge of geography that is inaccurate as well.

Yours sincerely,
ANDREW HUDSON,

London E17.

Sappho rising

Sir,

Re Ann Merrill's letter, Eye 766

If your "rabid, blood-spattered feminist" correspondent had properly read your review of DIRTY WEEKEND *and* AMERICAN PSYCHO *(or even the books themselves?), she would know that the former is "worse" because it puts forward the thesis that the sadistic mass-killing of males would be a constructive response to society's sexism, whereas the latter is "just" a horribly sick book about a horribly sick man.*

Why don't you start up the Wimmin column again?

Yours,
CHRIS KENDALL,

University College, Oxford.

Roeg's gallery

Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed an uncanny similarity between the formats of the latest Diet Coke advert (the elusive girl in red, etc) and Nicholas Roeg's 1973 suspense film DON'T LOOK NOW *(lifted, in turn, with great licence, from the novel by Daphne Du Maurier)?*

Given the untold wealth of the Coca Cola corporation, and given the bankruptcy of this director's last major outings, perhaps both he and his solicitors should be told.

Yours sincerely,
K.R. HARRISON,

Liverpool.

● *Readers are invited to send in examples of other adverts "borrowed" from television/cinema etc, for which the usual £5 is offered.*

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"If the Islamic revolution doesn't deliver you food, you've got egg all over your face."
JONATHAN DIMBLEBY, BBC1
(Penny Stewart)

"The flagship of NHS reforms has run aground and is sinking fast."
GUY'S HOSPITAL WORKER, BBC
(M.J. Lewsey)

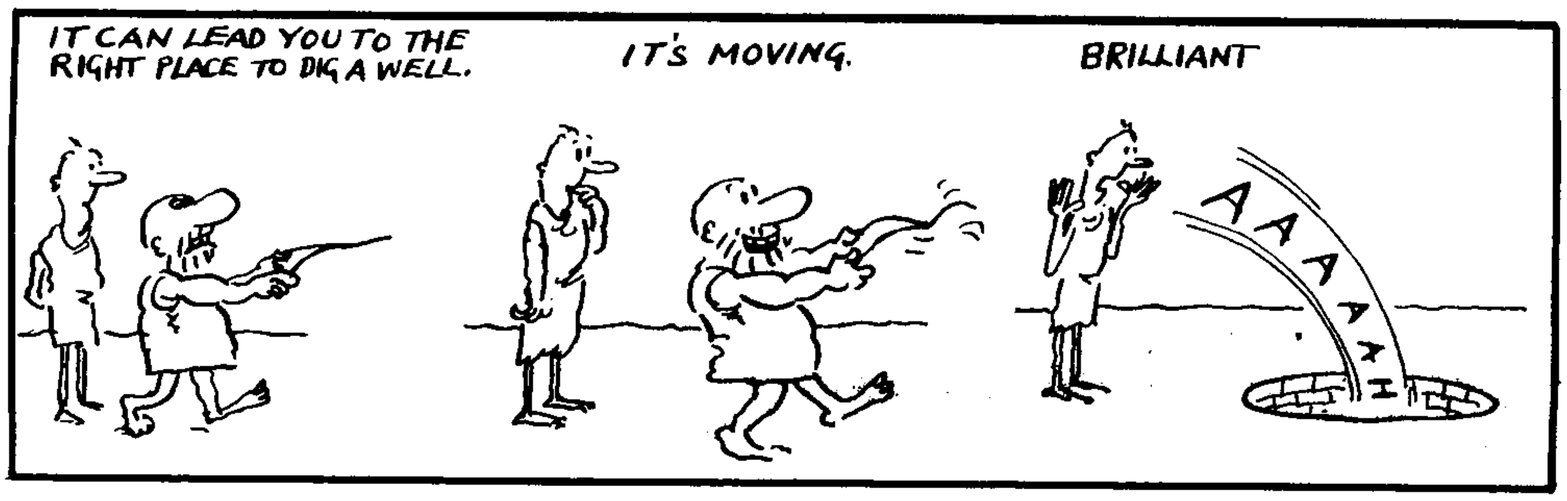
Caller: *My name is actually Nellie.*
Gary Davies: *Why?*
Caller: *Because it's my name.*
RADIO 1
(Richard Addison)

"In goalkeeping terms, Chris Turner is 5ft 11in."
RON JONES, BBC Radio 5
(David Belinfante)

"He wasn't checking who was behind him — he was just looking who it was."
BRENDAN FOSTER, BBC1
(George Ellis)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from **Pakistan**

From Our Own Correspondent

EVEN if our bulky prime minister Nawaz Sharif still needs to improve his wooden TV image, his acumen and drive have surprised many. The man whom Benazir Bhutto mocked as an oafish industrialist and provincial is showing himself better qualified to run the country than she ever was.

But appearances can be deceptive. Our elegant new Secretariat complex in Islamabad is finely finished in gleaming marble. But though its spacious cool halls look like the centre of government of a rich and stable country, the reality is that more power is being wielded by President Ishaq Khan, the smartest of our old civil servants, who maintains a cosy relationship with the generals who still call the shots in foreign policy and other key areas.

Nawaz Sharif is riding a tiger. His most dangerous challenge is the Shariat bill, supposedly a means of imposing Islamic law on Pakistan. The real issue is power: will it go to the secular politicians, lawyers and bureaucrats or to the most bigoted and militant in our Muslim clergy? And is it a coincidence that the bill would prevent a woman from becoming prime minister? The ruling coalition wants Benazir Bhutto out of politics and preferably out of Pakistan.

Bloody sectarian disputes between Shias and orthodox Sunni Muslims are already a big problem in the Punjab. The fundamentalist backlash is aggravating rivalries between many Muslim sects. But we still can't be sure if talk of Islam is simply lip-service to the right-wing religious parties, important to Nawaz Sharif's coalition. Our schools, press, TV and law courts all follow English and Western models, with token concessions to religion.

In Sind, our problem province in the south, ethnic and nationalist tensions are the most threatening. Fascist tactics are being used openly in Karachi against independent journalists. The bully boys of the ruling MQM (Mohajir Qaumi Movement) recently declared war on the Herald group of publications after hacks revealed unwelcome details of MQM feuding, violence and crime.

Anti-US sentiments are rampant too. Although we sent troops to defend Saudi Arabia, the Gulf War roused public opinion to fever-pitch. Our companies and workers are desperate to win a share of the fat contracts to rebuild Kuwait, but posters of Saddam Hussein in Superman pose are still common in our cities.

Washington's freeze on aid since last October is strongly resented as bullying. But in business circles many blame it on our government's confrontational approach over the nuclear question. It is increasingly argued that further resistance to Washington's goal of preventing nuclear proliferation risks damaging Pakistan's national interests. We should save our effort, and valuable goodwill, for a cause which matters more: Kashmir.

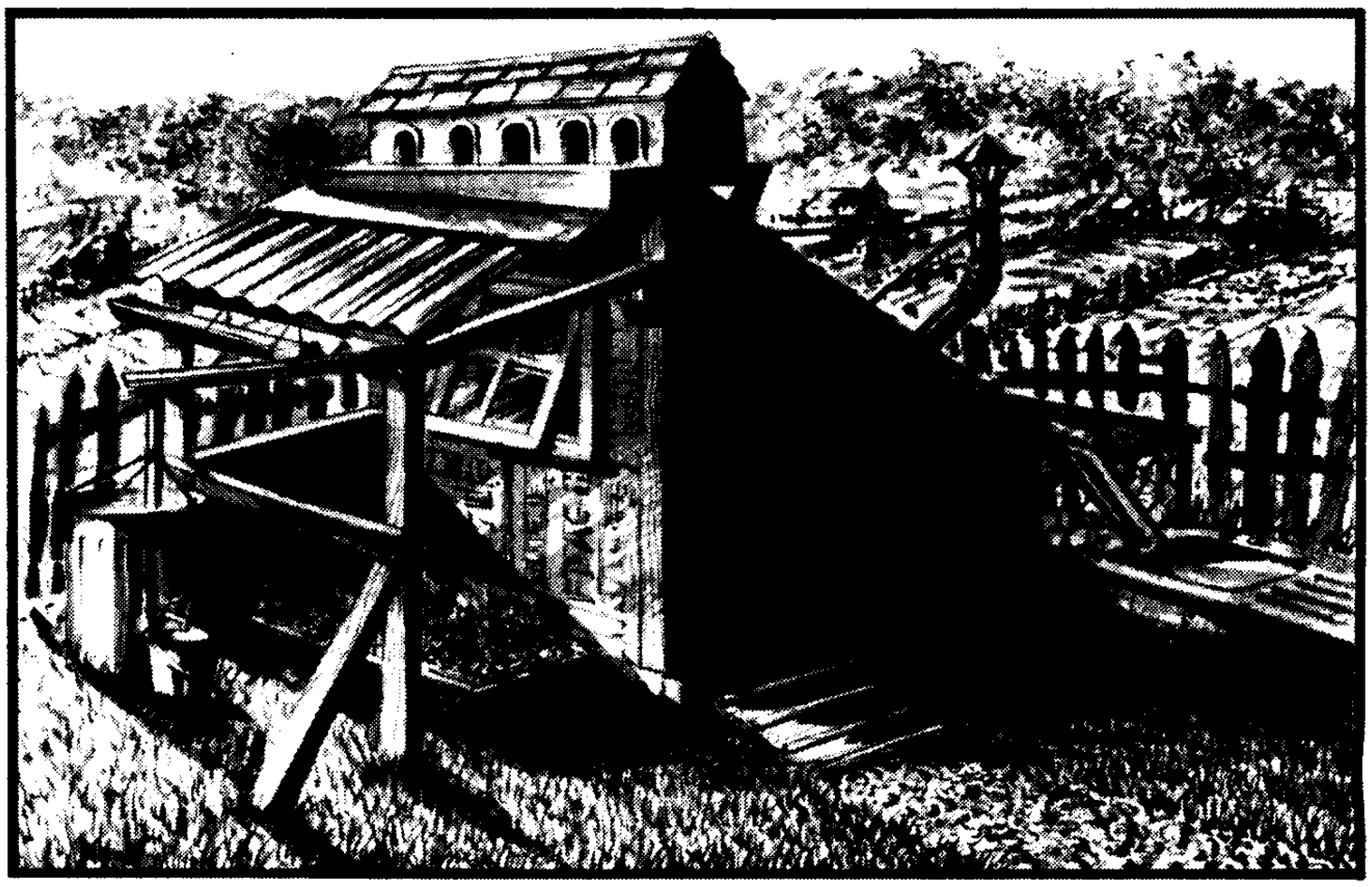
The selectivity of the West's conscience never ceases to amaze us. All those voices raised on behalf of the Palestinians and Kurds — but hardly a word about the wretched Muslims of Kashmir living under the jackboot of the Indian army. Relations with India are so tense that our armies are on a war footing along the borders.

Many believe the uprising will end with the Indian-ruled part of Kashmir seceding from India and joining with Pakistan's Azad ("Free") Kashmir, one-third of the disputed territory. The alternative independent mini-state of Kashmir on the Chinese border is too scary for the bureaucrats and generals to consider.

Our other major foreign problem is Afghanistan. Our generals still push for an impossible victory by their nominees among the rival Afghan guerrillas against the Najibullah regime. No one doubts the three million-odd Afghan refugees have outstayed their welcome here; but until a secure peace breaks out, few will return to their shattered villages.

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE'S TRUE STORIES

ILLUMINATED BY BERT KITCHEN



SPEAKING at a conference on South American medical authorities, Dr Alaos Miguel Carlo said:

"We are in the hands of mad politicians. Over one thousand complaints have been made about the service at Columbia's General Hospital. This famous institution has been officially opened six times by six different party leaders, but it is still not in service because the electricity has not been turned on. At the same time, the six openings cost over six million pesos, mostly for nibbles and drink."

INTERVIEWED on the occasion of his retirement, Mr Denys Hodson, ex-Director of Thamesdown Committee of Arts and Recreation, said:

"Allotment sheds should be developed as an art form. Such sheds are interesting examples of architecture without architects. We should develop this creative aspect.

"In fact, allotment art would promote a new approach to culture and the quality of life. It might bring young people back to food growing, whereas at the moment allotments are seen as a source of stress."

INSPECTOR Tataw Siaka of the Freetown (Sierra Leone) Vice Squad said that the case against Mr Madawake Bertin, a farmer from the village of Talia accused of making love to a goat, had to be postponed by the magistrate, Gabriel Babion, because when the charge was read out at Bo No. 1 court the accused, witnesses, court officials and members of the public burst into laughter and could not stop themselves laughing for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, the reaction had spread to Courts 3 and 5, then to the steps of the courthouse and finally into the street.

Said an official: "People could not contain themselves as word of Mr Bertin's charge spread. It was not until lunchtime, when hunger intervened, that Bo calmed down, and by then many other offenders were demanding to be dealt with."

MR RODNEY FLETCHER, owner of the Black Swan Tavern in Rutúra, New Zealand, has invented a new sport called Sticky.

"Sticky players wear velcro jumpsuits. They enter the competition area via a narrow catwalk and take a great leap onto a trampoline, or Sprung Court. Three sides of the arena are lined with velcro. The winning contestant is the one who sticks highest up.

"We think this has Olympic potential."

AS PART of his defence of Mrs Clara White, Mr Gerald Bate told the court that: "Granny White spent a substantial part of her £150 bingo win on cannabis because she has been using it since 1921 to calm her nerves."

"WE WERE all very excited when we heard that the Organisation for French International Athletics had invited us to Paris to compete with the world's best runners and weightlifters," said Mr Joseph Onika, a long-distance man from the Solomon Islands.

"However, when I and John Tebaubau — who is from Guam — arrived at Orly, we were taken straight to the French Alps and made to ski for fourteen days. Neither of us had skied before. But we were told it was for our own good, and we had to get on with it."

MRS MARIA Sauri Riancho Prima de Leon and her eight children have been arrested in Trabane, one of the poorer districts of Mexico City, for establishing a production line on which, following a new law that forbids the destruction of old Mexican banknotes by burning, she and her family were sellotaping together a hoard of 500-million-peso notes that had been shredded and scattered over the city's waste-paper dump.

Mr Luis Marentes, Governor of the Bank of Mexico, said: "They should be severely punished."

INFORMATION: El Tiempo, Columbia 20.2.91; Swindon Evening Advertiser 12.3.91; We Yonne (Sierra Leone) 3.9.90; New Zealand News 23.1.91; Northern Echo 9.3.91; Solomon Islands Star 22.2.91; Mexico News 30.12.90.

MONITORS: H.D. Bennetts, Tim Westcott, Mark Pendry, Dennis Moore, Adam Mill, Neil Judd, Rosalyn Frey.

RADIO 4

Pick of the Week

with the late MARGARET HOWARD

HOWARD: I particularly enjoyed the sitcom *Doctors On Opt*, which has been revived from a very bad old series to make an even worse new one...

(Cut to recording)

1st DOCTOR: I can't get enough... patients, I mean!

2nd DOCTOR: Privates?

3rd DOCTOR: How dare you?

1st DOCTOR: I'm handling my own budgets.

2nd DOCTOR: You should try the nurses.

3rd DOCTOR: Are you penny-pinching again?

1st DOCTOR: She's not called Penny.

2nd DOCTOR: We're a self-governing trust now.

3rd DOCTOR: Don't talk to me about trusses.

1st DOCTOR: Running this hospital is a pain in the backside.

2nd DOCTOR: Did someone mention William Waldegrave?

3rd DOCTOR: What a silly cut...

(Wild audience laughter. Cut back to studio)

HOWLONG: But most fun of all was Terry Wogan's wonderful interview earlier this week with David Icke.

(Cut to recording)

TERRY WOGAN: They're laughing, you see.

DAVID ICKE: I know, Terry, but they're not laughing *with* you.

TERRY WOGAN: What d'you mean?

DAVID ICKE: They're laughing *at* you, Terry. They think you're ridiculous and sad.

TERRY WOGAN: No they don't.

DAVID ICKE: They do. They think *you're* bonkers to have me on the show at all. They think it's all rather pathetic.

TERRY WOGAN: Ha, ha. Would you like to touch my toe, David? It's curling...

(Continued for far too long)

Lords overruled

Thatcher trial to go ahead

by Our Political Staff **Alan Watneys**

IT NOW seems certain that "within 18 months" the former Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, will face a "major war crimes trial" for her part in the "systematic destruction of Britain" over the period 1979-1990.

Mrs Hitler is due to face a whole string of charges relating to her time as the self-styled "Supreme Ruler of the Universe". These include:

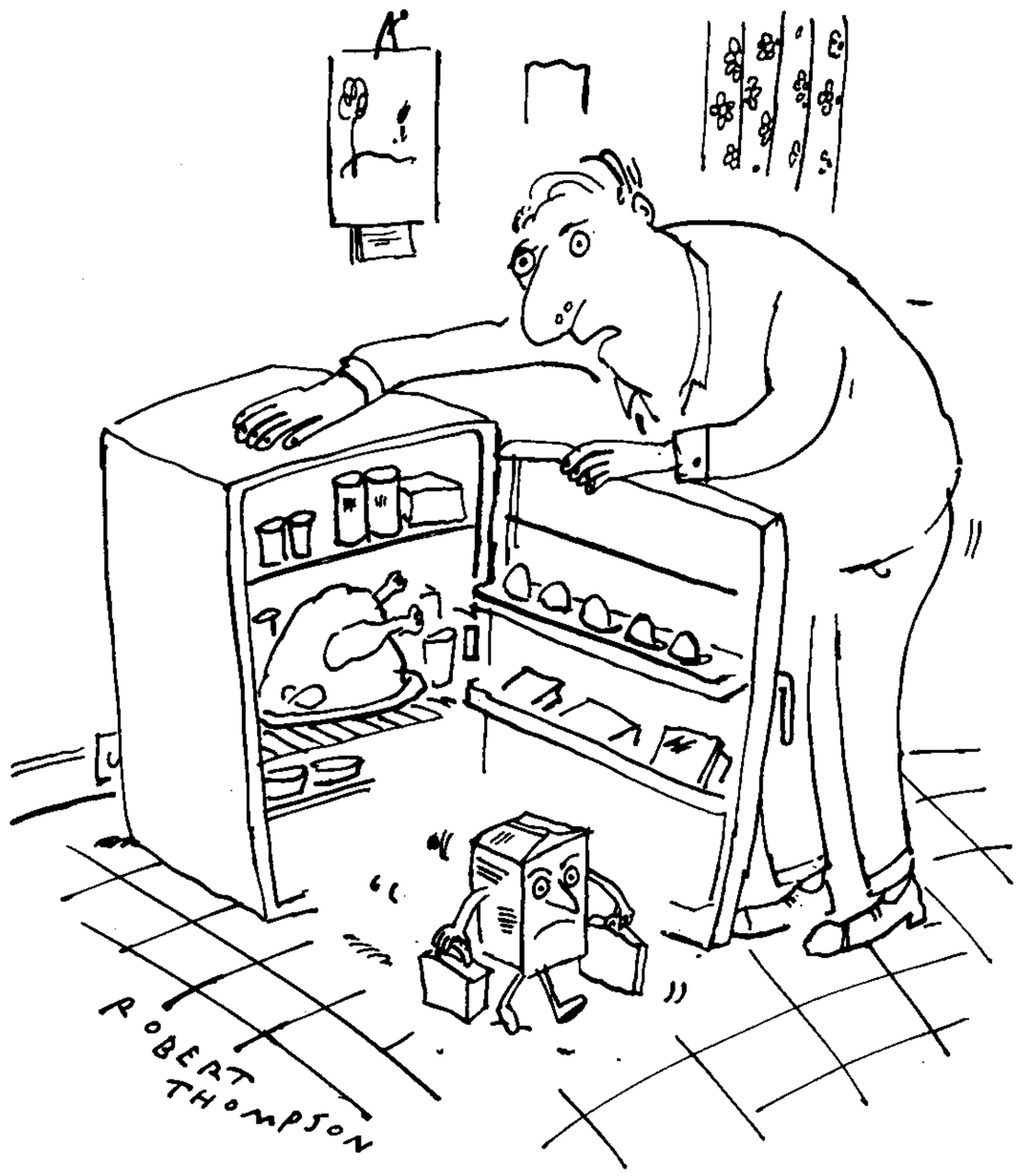
- **twice dragging her country into disastrous wars, which she presented to her countrymen as "glorious victories"**
- **engineering the near-complete collapse of the British economy, leaving millions unemployed and homeless**
- **commissioning "death squads" of the notorious SAS secret police to roam Gibraltar killing innocent terrorists** *(shurely 'tourists'? Ed. No. A.W.)*
- **the introduction of the hated poll tax, which provoked mass riots all over Britain**
- **installing Ceasescu-style "Iron Gates" outside her London bunker**
- **being thoroughly ghastly, with her awful voice, handbag etc.**

In recent months, realising that the game was up, Mrs Thatcher has been moving from one "safe house" to another all over west London, in a desperate bid to escape the vengeance of her former subjects.

Deutschmark Thatcher

But now the Government seems determined to stage a "show trial" of Mrs Thatcher and all she stood for, in order to distance itself from any taint of the Thatcherite legacy which has left the country in ruins.

John Major is 47¾.



"Darling, I think the milk's off"

Peter Carter-Fuck & Partners

Pat v. Mellor

Dear Sir,

We represent Mr Postman Pat, the well-known mail operative. It has been drawn to our attention that, on a recent visit to his local sorting office in Neasden, your client Mr David Mellor, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, expressed severe dissatisfaction at the working practices of the Post Office, which he described as "grotesquely incompetent, absurdly inefficient and no better than Postman Pat".

This is without question a most serious libel on our client Mr Pat, who has become widely known as a much-respected and conscientious officer of the Royal Mail postal delivery service. It would be hard to imagine, we submit, a more disgraceful and opprobrious slur on a diligent and much-loved public servant who, as is well known, received a British Empire Medal from Her Majesty the Queen in 1987, in recognition of his services to the rural community of Greendale.

We demand a full and immediate apology from your client, and a token sum of damages to the amount of £2 million, to compensate our client for the huge fees that he has incurred in asking us to write this letter.

Yours faithfully,

P. FARTER-CUCK

(Shurely 'Carter-Fuck'? W.D.)

Charismatic Black Power leader flies in

by Our Race Staff
Barry White, James Brown and Cilla Black

THE REVEREND Al Sharpton today arrived in Britain, to be greeted by an enthusiastic flock of admirers.

Hundreds of devoted followers wearing badges marked "PRESS" clamoured for a glimpse of their idol as aides wheeled the controversial New York minister into a waiting taxi.

The Rev. Al is a legend in America, but only now has his fame spread to Britain.

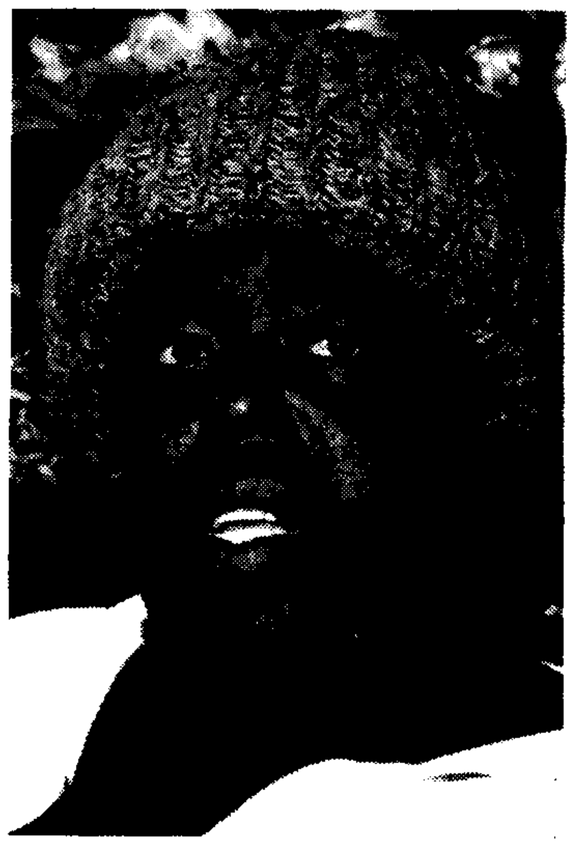
Said one recent convert to Big Al, as he stood at the airport with his camera poised:

"Alleluia, Brother! We are saved! Yesterday we had no story for the front page! It was all boring Council Tax! Now we have a fat black man with a moustache! It is a miracle!"

Total non-story

Other members of the overweight padre's fan club were quick to join in the chorus of praise.

"I got three pages out of him," said one ecstatic disciple. "I got a feature *and* a leader," said another. Yet another said: "My headline BOOT OUT THIS BLACK MENACE knocked GOODBYE GAZZA off page 3."



Meanwhile, in Stockwell, the millionaire pastor preached to another huge congregation of journalists, whilst a small number of bedraggled black people stood in the rain and ignored him.

Al Sharpton is nobody.

Thanksgiving service marred by controversy

by Our Glasgow correspondent
Charles Gorballs

MEMBERS of the Royal Family, senior politicians and leading figures in the armed forced gathered here today for a service of thanksgiving for the successful deliverance of the nation from Mrs Thatcher.

Earlier, there had been controversy surrounding the service, many people feeling that it would be wrong to gloat over the defeat of a hated enemy. The word "victory" was thus omitted from the prayers and instead the theme of "remembrance and reconciliation" was emphasised.

In his sermon, the Reverend J.C. McFlannel told the assembled dignitaries: "Today is a sad day, but also a happy one. We remember the terrible sacrifices we all made during the long years of darkness, but now we thank God that she has gone from our midst. We shall now sing hymn no.94, *Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, Out, Out, Out* with an accompaniment on the tambourine by the Archbishop of Canterbury."

In this week's Sunday papers

- Valerie Grove on interviewing Lyn Barber.
- Lyn Barber on being interviewed by Valerie Grove.
- Valerie Grove on being written about by Lyn Barber about her interview with Valerie Grove.
- Lyn Barber on why no one is reading Sunday papers any more.

Apology
Mr Paddy Ashdown

In common with all other newspapers over recent years we may have given the impression that we considered Mr Paddy Ashdown to be a negligible figure in British political life. Leaders such as PADDY WHO?, ASHDOWN THE TUBES and VOTE CONSERVATIVE may have inadvertently suggested to our readers that the Liberal Democrat leader was a man of little substance who had nothing to offer the electorate or his own party. In one particular piece, our columnist, Dr Barkworth, went so far as to say: "Resign now, you useless git."

We now accept wholeheartedly that such accusations and insinuations were entirely groundless and without any foundation whatsoever.

We are happy to make it clear that Mr Ashdown is a towering statesman, a vital third force in the moribund duopoly of current political life, who could well play a crucial role in the event of a hung parliament. *(See Barbara Amiel, Peter Jenkins, Robert Harris, Alan Watneys, and hundreds of others...)*

We apologise to Mr Ashdown and his party for any distress we may have caused him and have agreed to pay a lot more attention to what he says in the future.

DOCTOR WHOEN MAGAZINE
LAST WEEK DR.WHOEN WAS UTTERLY DESTROYED OR WAS HE?
HE'S FINISHED. IT'S ALL OVER.
NOT SO FAST ROSIE! LOOK, HE'S REGENERATING.
THE MANY FACES OF DR.WHOEN THROUGH THE AGES REAPPEAR IN THE TIME CONTINIUM...
SUTCH
LAB
GREEN
ALLIANCE
SDP
WHAT OUTRAGEOUS GUISE WILL HE TURN UP IN THIS TIME?
GREETINGS DOCTOR. YOU MUST HELP US. WE'RE TEARING OURSELVES APART.
YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT MAN!
HE'S A UNIFYING FORCE. HE'S SOMETHING WE CAN AGREE ON.
WE DON'T WANT HIM. GO AWAY!
UH-OH! BACK INTO THE TARDIS ROSIE!
IT LOOKS ENORMOUS ON THE OUTSIDE, BUT INSIDE IT'S TINY, THERE'S HARDLY ROOM FOR ANYONE.
GASP! THE DOCTOR'S COMPLETELY CHANGED.
HELLO! I'M ON FOR ANY PARTY. LAB/LIB/CON/CHILDRENS/21st/WEDDING/BAR-MITZVAHS....
OH! NO HE HASN'T
BUT WHERE ON EARTH ARE WE?
SLOWLY THE TARDIS DISAPPEARED...
WHERE TO NOW DOCTOR?
SOMEWHERE WHERE I'VE GOT A FUTURE.
SET A COURSE FOR THE PAST!
VWORP

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

I cannot understand why people are complaining that Mr Heseltine's new council tax is too complicated. As I joked to Norman over breakfast this morning: "You hardly need six 'O' Levels in Maths to understand it! You simply assess which of the fourteen bands your house comes into and then work out that if you've only got an average of 1.3 persons living in the property in question, then your council tax liability will fall within the government guidelines!" How anyone can say this is complicated, when Mr Heseltine originally wanted to have 34 bands, is beyond me. Thanks to my decisive intervention at our Cabinet meeting last week, the whole thing is now so simple that I am sure we will win the local elections hands down!

Tuesday

I woke up this morning feeling that a great weight has been taken off my mind. Now that the poll tax is dead and buried, all our problems are as good as over.

Mind you, some people are never satisfied. I read in the paper this morning that a lot of businessmen at a meeting somewhere have been complaining about the economy and saying that things are getting worse. What a considerable load of rubbish this is. At our cabinet meeting this morning, Norma Lamont told us all that everything was going to be alright and that the recovery was only just around the corner. I for one was very reassured to hear this, because after all he *is* the Chancellor of the Exchequer, so he should know! Oh yes. I used to say the same thing when I was the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and people always believed me.

My friend Chris then said to Norma: "So what you mean is that there is a red light at the end of the tunnel." Everyone laughed at this, which shows that they must all be pretty confident that everything is going to be alright.

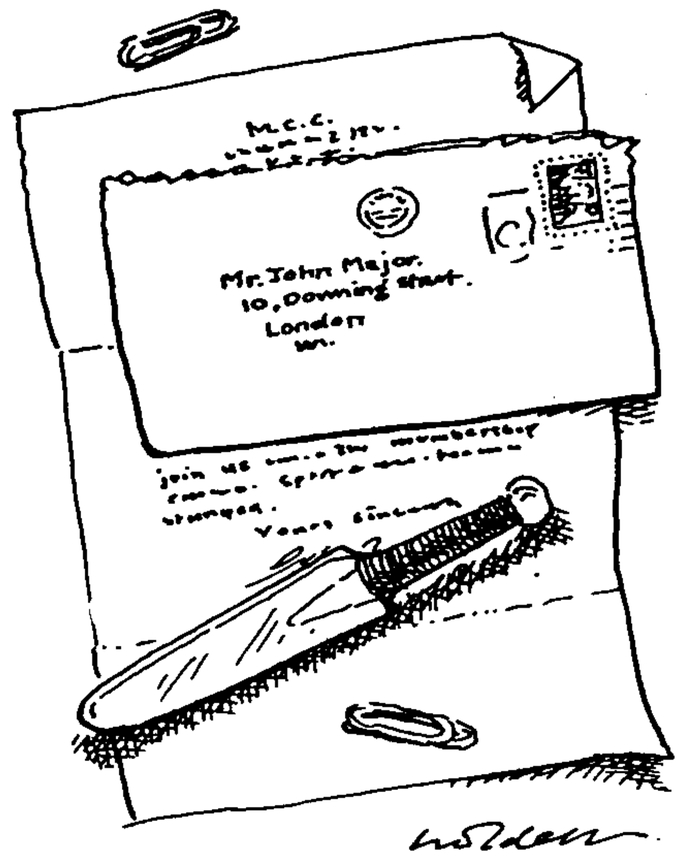
Wednesday

I am getting very considerably annoyed by what is happening about the Kurds. I was looking at my wall map this morning, which now has a large pin at the top with a paper flag marked "Safe Haven". My wife Norman typed this out for me so that it looks really professional. This shows that I have done my bit to solve the problem, but where, oh where is the flag saying "United Nations Kurdkeeping Force"? Where are the troops of Finland, Ireland and the Gabon? Where is the Zairian Navy that Mr Hurd promised me would soon be on its way to the mountains?

Honestly, if you don't do it yourself, nothing gets done in this world! No wonder Norman has told *Hello* that I am at death's door! I have decided to write a very stiff letter indeed to Mr de Kwelluar *(check spelling with Mr Waldegrave — I do not recall getting an 'O' Level in this subject!)*. He is the man in charge of the United Nations, and I shall tell him in no uncertain terms to pull out all his fingers on this one. Also, it will show the world how tough I am when my letter is published in all tomorrow's papers, under Mr O'Donnell's suggested heading NOW MAJOR GETS TOUGH WITH UN.

Thursday

Today something really important has happened. I have had a letter



telling me that I have been elected as a member of the MCC. Usually you have to wait a very considerable period of years (18) to get in. I however have been allowed to join immediately. This is definite proof that Britain is becoming a classless society, when someone from my background can join such an elitist club without having to wait, a club that includes such famous names as Jeffrey Archer and Tim Rice.

Furthermore, it might be pointed out, this particular honour is one that was never granted to Mrs Thatcher in all the eleven years that she was Prime Minister. It must make her very bitter.

Friday

While I was talking to my friend Chris this morning about the Benson & Hedges first round, Mr Baker came in to say that he hoped I didn't mind, but there was a major constitutional crisis.

Apparently it is something to do with the War Crimes Bill. I thought we had all forgotten about this one. Oh no, said Mr Baker, who has a considerably annoying smile. We owe it to Mrs Thatcher, he said. This was her baby and we should make sure that the bill was passed to show that we haven't rejected absolutely everything she stood for.

I said that in my personal judgement it would be a remarkable mistake to pass this bill, as it could not work and it would get us all into a by no means small mess.

My friend Chris said: "It will be fitting memorial to Mrs Thatcher, then." But Mr Baker did not smile.

Saturday

People are complaining that we have done badly in the local elections. What rubbish! When you sit down and look at the figures with considerable consideration you can see that we could have done much worse. We could have lost all the seats. That would have warranted some criticism but a mere 800 lost is hardly something to write home about. Anyway, as Chris says, "Now we don't have to have a June election."

This is a weight off my mind as I will now be able to go to the Test Matches in peace and sit in the pavilion.

"That's one seat you haven't lost," said Mr Waldegrave, who I must admit is not my flavour of the month.

His handling of the National Health issue has been quite feeble. "It is not my job to run the National Health Service"(!) For a supposedly clever man who has been to Oxford Mr Waldegrave (pronounced 'Wargrave' as he always insists) is pretty dense. I said to Chris: "It is like me saying 'It is not my job to run the country.' " Chris gave me one of his funny looks.

Sunday

Mr Bush has had heart troubles and I have sent him a Get Well Soon card which Norman chose in W.H. Smith. It shows a man playing golf with the message "In the rough? Hope you are back on the fairway soon."

However, I can't help thinking that it serves Mr Bush right. After all, only a few weeks ago he was telling me that *I* looked ill, which everyone used as an excuse to be rude about me. Well, who is looking terrible now?

At the Cabinet Meeting David Mellor agreed and said that Mr Bush looked as if he was on the way out. "Why don't *you* take up jogging, John?" he asked. Like Mr Waldegrave, Mr Mellor often misses the point.

MCC of E to split over women?

by Our Religious Affairs Staff
Billy Graham Leonard Hutton

THE CRICKETING world was rocked to its foundations yesterday when the MCC Synod voted by 81 votes to 80 not to allow women players into cricket's Holy of Holies.

Our Lord's

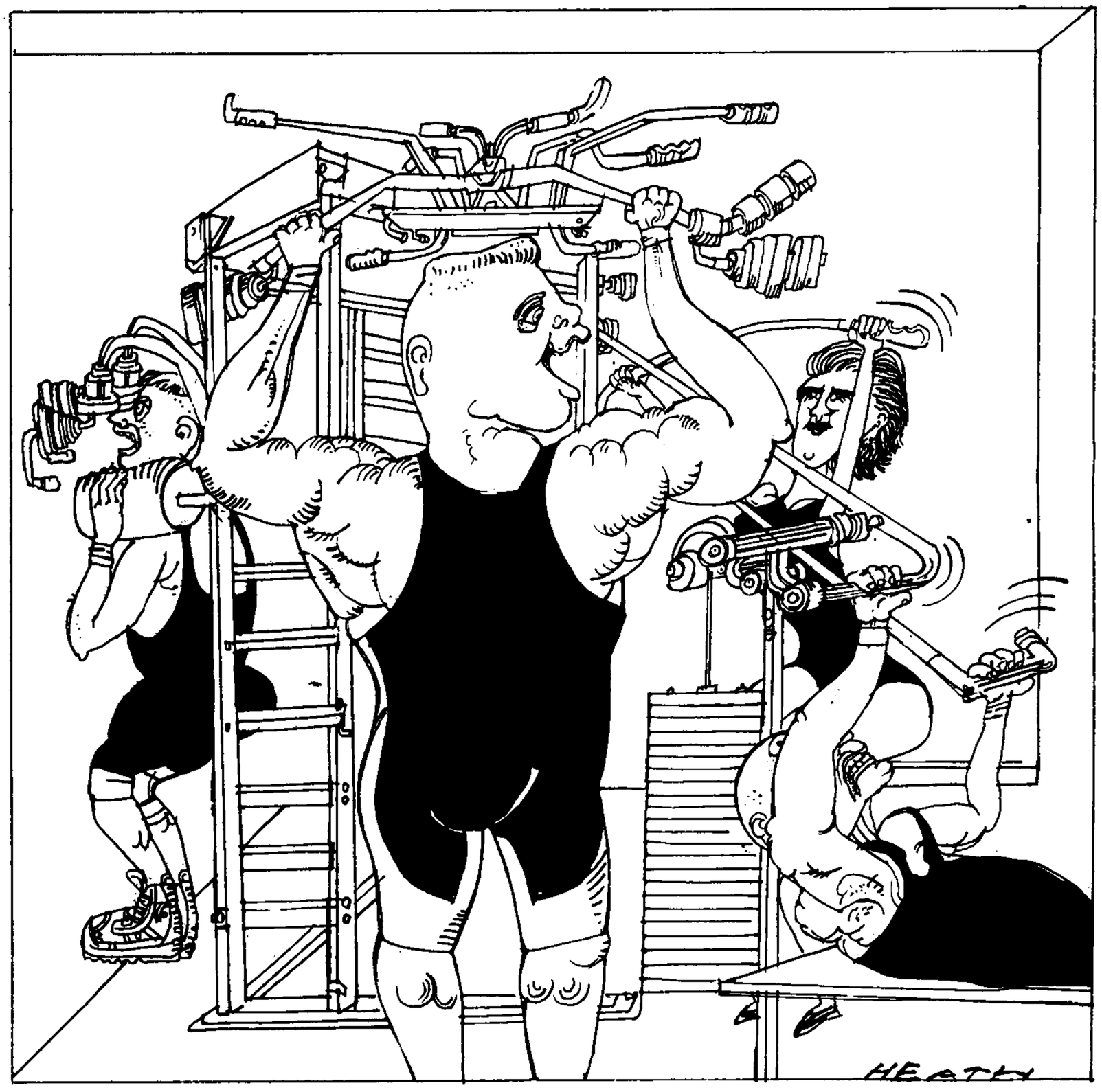
Traditionalists cheered the narrow victory for the continued male monopoly.

"If God had intended women to sit in deck chairs and fall asleep," said Colonel Sir Bufton Tufton, "he would have given them red faces and silly striped ties."

Am I My Brother's Wicketkeeper?

Meanwhile, outside the pavilion at Lord's, a mass demonstration was staged by the solitary figure of Deaconess Rachel Heyhoe-Flint, the only woman stupid enough to want to join all those bores and drunks.

There now seems no question that, if Heyhoe-Flint and her supporters ever win the day, there will be a schism in the ranks of the MCC, leading to the setting-up of a new all-male bar down the road where members can get drunk without ever having to watch the cricket at all.



Great Bores Of Today.

"...perfick isn't it? ha ha ha I'll do ten more of these and then I've got to get back and watch it they went to France last week classic he's so good I loved him as Del Boy but now he's surpassed himself and she's very good as the wife and what about the daughter? blimey and the food they eat is just out of this world bacon and eggs and fresh strawberries and everything it takes you back the '50s must have been great no one paid taxes and there was no traffic on the road and the countryside was beautiful and did you see the one where they got married and the taxman got pissed and fell over? blinder ha ha ha and they're all really nice people and they all love each other everyone I know watches it the BBC turned it down I bet they're kicking themselves now ha ha ha perfick ha ha ha..."

Celeb

LIGGER

LOOK WHERE HE'S STANDING. ONE SLIP AND HE'S A GONER.
YEAH.
WOW! THIS REMINDS ME OF THE BEATLES ROOFTOP CONCERT IN 'LET IT BE' WITH ALL THE POLICE DOWN THERE.
BE CAREFUL YOU DON'T FALL. THERE'S A 100 FOOT DROP FROM THAT LEDGE.
DON'T WORRY. NOW WE'RE ON THE ROOF WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, LADS?
GET BACK GARY, GET BACK.
YEAH ALRIGHT.
JO JO WAS A MAN WHO THOUGHT HE WAS A LONER BUT HE KNEW IT COULDN'T LAST...

NO. TEN
TRILLION AND
THIRTY-SIX

CLOUD NINE

HARP

THE IN-HOUSE MAGAZINE OF HEAVEN

Three billion Archangels axed as recession bites

BY OUR CELESTIAL STAFF ST PAUL FOOT
(CAMPAIGNING JOURNALIST OF THE MILLENNIUM)

PROOF that the recession is now the worst economic downturn in the past two million years came today with the news that God is to shed three billion middle-management archangels.

"This is only part of an across-the-board management shakeout which will eventually affect every tier of the celestial hierarchy," said Heavenly Spokesman Gabriel. "We are looking at a rationalisation programme which could involve redundancies among Cherubim, Seraphim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, and even chanters of 'Holy, Holy, Holy'.

"People must stop thinking that they have got their jobs for eternity," said the Archangel.

The news of the cuts was greeted with dismay in the Celestial City, where many stocks were marked down sharply. Harps fell by a record two million points, and Haloes also eased, to finish well beneath their previous all-time low.

One leading cherub told me, off the record: "They say our father's house has many mansions but, I can tell you, we're not shifting any of them."

God Himself was unavailable for comment last night, preferring to remain invisible. But a seraph who had just received his redundancy notice spake forthwith, and said: "Lo, things must be serious up here if the Old Man is handing out the P45s. They will be telling us next that Marks & Spencers are laying people off."

Late News

Four Horseman of the Apocalypse to be slashed to One.

On Other Pages

"Everything booming down here," says Devil.
Heaven's top rival tells Cloud Nine why business is hotting up for Hell Inc. Full story inside.

✝

Why Oh Why Heaven Is Not What It Used To Be by St Paul Johnson
p. 666

Never a Crossword Up Here
p. 24

✝

Your Heavenly Strains Tonight
p. 3

✝

Weather: Bright, shiny, many white clouds.

✝

Unfunny cartoon by Leonardo
p.94

ST MATT

"I've just got the sackcloth and ashes"

The new Sunday night comedy sensation

starring Stephen Fry as **HURD**
and Hugh Laurie as **"BERTIE" MAJOR**
plus the late Hermione Gingold as **AUNT MAGATHA**

in

HURD AND MAJOR

by P. G. Wodehouse

Scene: The Drones Club

(There is a sound of low droning from various members of the Cabinet. "Biffy" Patten is throwing bread rolls at "Barmy" Mellor with a lot of giggling. Camera zooms in on "Bertie" Major staring at period copy of Daily Telegraph headed MAJOR COCK-UP OVER KURDS*)*

BERTIE: Oh, I say. I seem to be in a bit of a fix with regard to these Kurd birds.

BARMY: What ho, Bertie! You look a bit glum.

BERTIE: Oh yes. I jolly well am. These dashed Kurds. They get a chap down.

BARMY: Why don't you have a word with your man Hurd. He went to Eton. He'll come up with some wheeze.

(Cut to Hurd brushing down suit with deferential expression)

HURD: Do I take it Sir is concerning himself over the slight matter of the displaced Kurdistanis?

BERTIE: Yes, I jolly well am, Hurd. I mean, dash it, no one at the Drones had even heard of the little blighters until yesterday. Not even "Stiffy" Waldegrave, and you know what a swot he is.

HURD: Yes, sir, you are referring, I take it, to the unfortunate mountain-folk of northern Mesopotamia, who were regrettably not given independent status in the Lausanne Settlement of 1921.

BERTIE: Yes, alright, Hurd. That's enough of your history lessons. But what am I supposed to do now? That's what I want to know.

(Phone rings. Hurd answers it. He listens for some minutes as loud voice of elderly female can be heard squawking down the line)

HURD: Very good, ma'am. I shall convey your instructions to Mr Major at once.

(Replaces receiver delicately)

HURD: That was Lady Thatcher, sir. She wishes you to know that she is much exercised by your apparent failure to come up with a solution to the Kurdish problem.

BERTIE: Dash it all, Hurd! Give a chap a chance. I was about to come up with something, just as soon as you'd told me what it was.

HURD *(polishing silver teapot):* It did occur to me, sir, that since these unfortunate people had to leave their homes because of our intervention, perhaps we should intervene again to escort them back to their homes.

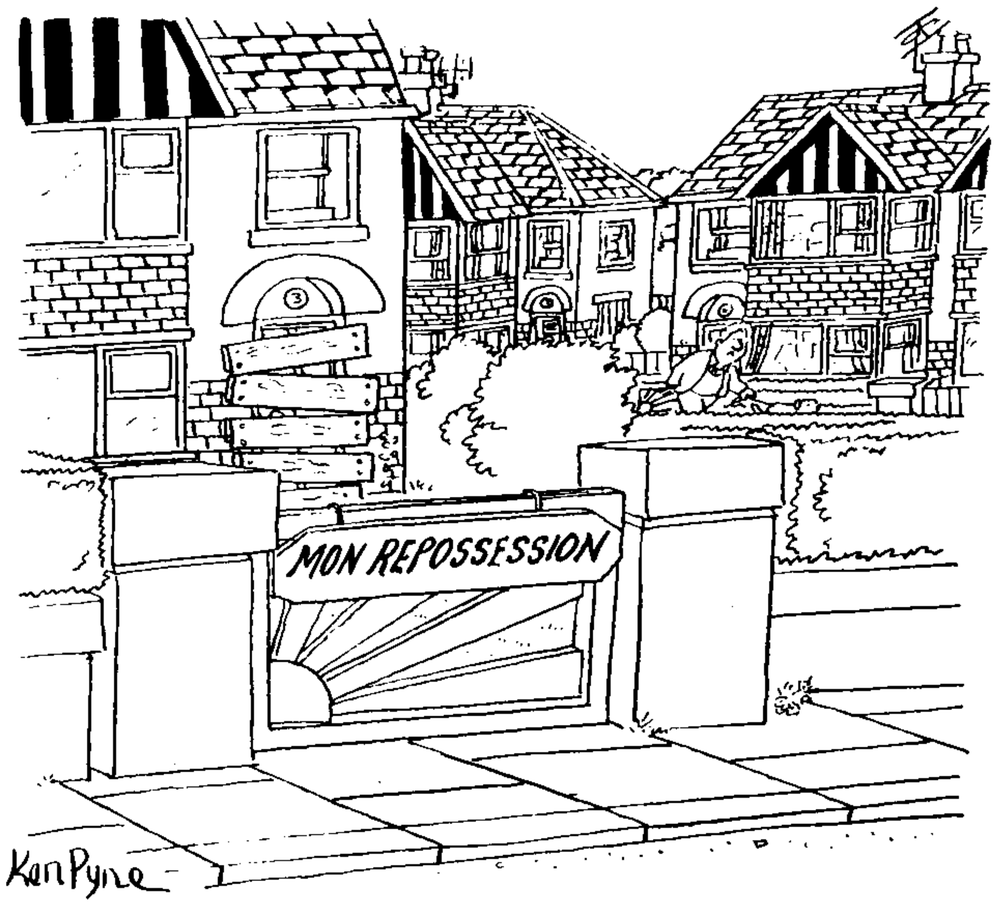
BERTIE: Brilliant, Hurd! I say, what an absolutely top-hole notion! You wouldn't have a name for this scheme of ours, would you?

HURD: Might I suggest, sir, that since the essence of the plan is to persuade these unhappy Kurds that they will find a safe haven from all their adversities, we should perhaps entitles the project OPERATION SAFE HAVEN?

BERTIE: Good Lord, Hurd, I think you've got it!

(He moves to piano and sings, to his own accompaniment "Haven, I'm in haven..." Hurd grimaces at appalling travesty of old song and resumes polishing silver)

Proportional Representation — Kinnock decides



Jilly Cooper talks exclusively to Private Eye, and also Hello, the Daily Mail, the Daily Express and all other newspapers and magazines

'THE DAY I REALISED IT WOULD COME OUT'

IN THE comfy chaos of her Gloucestershire home, Jolly Sooper talked frankly to me (and sixty other hacks) about the terrible trauma she has just lived through.

"You never think it's going to be you," she said sadly, patting her favourite Labrador on the head. "And then the terrible phone call comes.

"My stomach churned, the room seemed to spin, and I felt a terrible guilt and rage and depression and shame and anger."

She is quiet for a moment, lost in the bitter memory of how her country idyll was shattered by one brutal phone call.

"It was my publisher. He said: 'It's going to come out tomorrow.' "

"What? The terrible truth?" I asked. Jilly shuddered as she recalled the day of reckoning.

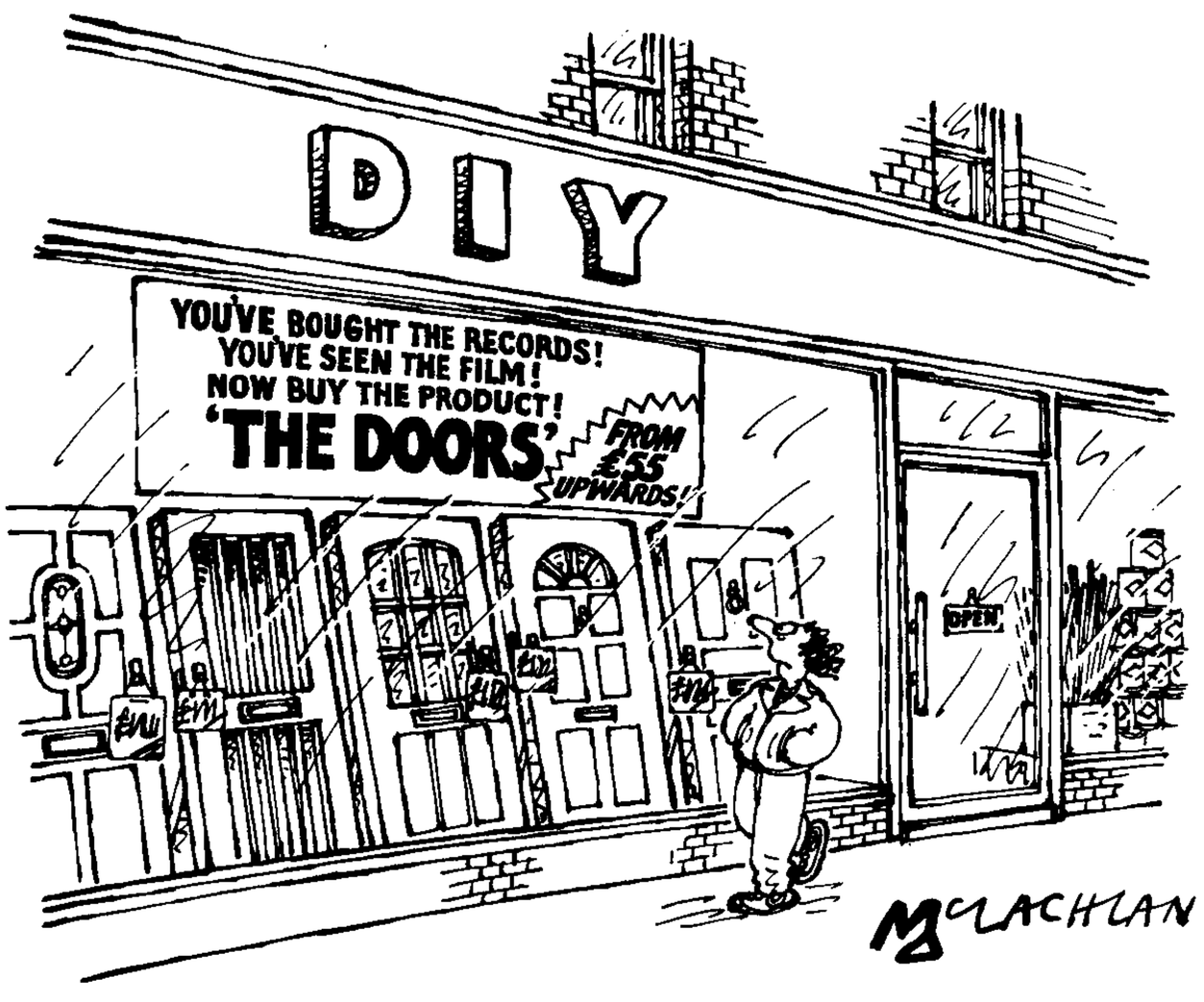
" 'No,' he said. 'Your book. *Polo*. It's coming out. We've organised a press conference. So you can do your weepy number about Leo's bit on the side.' I was horrified, and agreed immediately. It's appalling what a woman has to go through in order to make a lot of money. Even discussing her private life just to drum up a few sales at airports. It's humiliating, really."

There was scarcely a dry eye as Jilly posed for photographs in front of her agreeable stone fireplace and handed out a press pack entitled 'JILTED JILLY'S DAY OF ANGUISH'.

Jolly gave us a last wan smile before ushering us to the door.

"Thank you so much," she said. "You've all been terribly sweet and kind, but now I need some time to be alone with the television crew that's coming to interview me."

© *JollySooperTrash*



Yes, It's • TV Snooker Rhyming Slang!

Green baize	**Goes on for days**
Davis, Steve	**No reprieve**
Maximum Break	**Can't keep awake**
Stephen Hendry	**Not exactly incendiary**
Ted Lowe	**Whispers slow**
Steve James	**Very dull games**
BBC2	**All night through**
Pot Black	*Twin Peaks* **got sack**
Voice doing scoring	**Incredibly boring**
Pot the red	**Time for bed**

(That's enough snooker, Ed.)

HEIR OF SORROWS

BY

SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: Following the success of his Shakespeare speech, Charles has summoned his personal think-tank to Highgrove.

Now read on...

THERE they all were — Charles's hand-picked advisers, seated round the polished circular Fruitannut table at Highgrove. Charles surveyed with pride the brains that he had assembled from all walks of life to counsel him.

There was Dr Barkworth, his long flowing hair brushed back like a lion's mane, staring studiously at his own column in the *Sunday Telegraph*: "How I hate Tower Blocks and Madonna's Hamburgers".

Next to him, Professor Nuffield from Oxford, bearded and pipe smoking, his brow creased as his great mind wrestled with the issues of the day.

To his right the impressive figure of Mrs Betty Shine, resplendent in turquoise tracksuit, her gold homeopathic medallion glinting as the early spring sunshine filtered through the ancient leaded windows. *(Get on with it. Ed.)*

The mellow chimes of the Speyhawk Longbond Chronometer struck midday, waking the sleeping form of Sir Laurens van der Post, perhaps the most venerable of all those present at the gathering.

Charles began:

"Well, gentleman — and Mrs Shine, ha ha ha..."

There was a ripple of appreciative laughter at the Prince's delightful aside.

"Here we all are, like Shakespeare's Knights of the Round Table."

Professor Nuffield raised an eyebrow, but the Prince continued.

"My speech, as we all know, was terrifically... er... you know... successful, but I don't want it to be just a sort of flash in the pan sort of thing. I mean, English is after all the most important thingie, the way we talk and so on, the fountainhead and fabric of the education whatever..."

There was a silence as Charles paused, which was broken at last by Dr Barkworth.

"May I say, sir, on behalf of all of us how absolutely you have put your finger once again on the pulse of national opinion."

The group nodded. "Hear, hear!" muttered Montagu Porridge, the youthful campaign director of Friends of the Corn Circles.

Dr Barkworth meanwhile warmed to his theme.

"We really have to teach young people Shakespeare at school, otherwise, in the words of the Bard himself:

'How other than inst Parnassus fruit
Are these our lowliest labours lost.'

There was an instant chorus of "How true. How very true that is, when you think about it."

Charles stood up and set his notes to one side, impassioned by the support of these leviathans of thought, and began to pace about the priceless silk Atullah carpet.

"I mean, some young people leave school with no appreciation of the arts at all. All they are interested in is pop music! They can't go into a street without a Walkman device over their ears, deafening themselves with its relentless thud thud thud. They don't read any books, they'd rather skim through this *Hello* magazine or watch *Rock of the Pops* on the television!"

As he spoke, the assembly enthusiastically echoed his thoughts.

"We're in mid-symposium, darling. We'll probably be here all day. Dr Barkworth's prepared a paper for this afternoon entitled — what is it again, Barkworth?"

The Doctor shuffled through his notes.

"Shakespeare and the Tower Block: Have we lost touch with reality?"

Charles smiled as Diana snatched up the keys and hurried from the room. The Prince, somewhat relieved, resumed his peroration:

"Where was I? Oh yes — the cinema, the video, the television... Something must be done."

"SOMETHING must be done. We're all agreed." The room was now bathed in the soft glow from the crystal chandelier and the dusk outside had given way to the dark cloak of night. "I suggest that we reconvene to draw up a programme of action to take things forward in a very real sense."

"Absolutely!" agreed the company, as Sir Alan Fitztightly shimmered around the table, offering Sandeshaw port from a cut-glass Watergate decanter.

"For this relief, much thanks," said Professor Nuffield, chuckling as he

"Appalling!"

"It really is."

"One word for it."

"I expect some young women, for instance, have never even heard of Shakespeare. Their minds are too full of shopping and fashion and pop stars... these awful American persons... and videos all over the house."

Charles was interrupted by the door opening, and Diana strode purposefully towards him.

The think-tank all stood up stiffly, and Professor Nuffield bowed low. As he did so, his pipe fell out of his top pocket and shattered the priceless Chinese embonpoint that stood at the centre of the table.

Diana smiled graciously:

"Can I have the keys, Chazzo? I'm off to the cinema."

Charles handed her the classic Rolls keyring (a gift from the Mayor of Reading, bearing the inscription GOOD LUCK FROM ROYAL BERKSHIRE).

heartily drained his third glass of the rich ruby fluid.

The door opened once again to reveal the elegant shape of Diana, her face this time flushed with excitement.

"It was brilliant, Chazzo."

"Yes, I'm sure, darling. You must tell me all about it later," Charles replied hurriedly. "I'm sure my distinguished friends are not terribly interested, darling, in whatever it was you've seen."

"It was packed out!" Diana continued regardless, her eyes dancing with delight.

"You should have come. Mel Gibson was amazing. And what a story! All about this prince who can't make up his mind. It's really so relevant to today. That's the great thing about Shakespeare — you don't have to study it, you can just enjoy it. It really makes you think. We're going to see it again on Tuesday. Fantastic stuff..."

(To be continued)

'It's all crap'

Top boss in shock blunder

by Our City Staff **Roland Ratner**

AN EXTRAORDINARY gaffe by one of Britain's most successful self-made men yesterday threatened to ruin an outstanding career.

Mr John Major, head of the Conservative Group, which has branches in all Britain's towns and cities, shocked the nation with his public admission that the policies he has been selling for the last ten years are, as he put it, "crap".

Ring of truth

Mr Major joked that the reason people bought his line was that "it is rubbish and that's what they want".

He cited the Poll Tax as a typical example.

"We sold it, knowing full well that it would fall apart within a year or so. And it has. A prawn sandwich from Marks & Spencers is more valuable than anything you'll have got from us. People are mugs. They've got no sense."

There was an immediate outcry following the reporting of Mr Major's off-the-cuff remarks in the national press. Colleagues and customers alike were outraged.

"How can we sell these policies if he goes round admitting they are worthless tat?" said one senior Conservative backbencher.

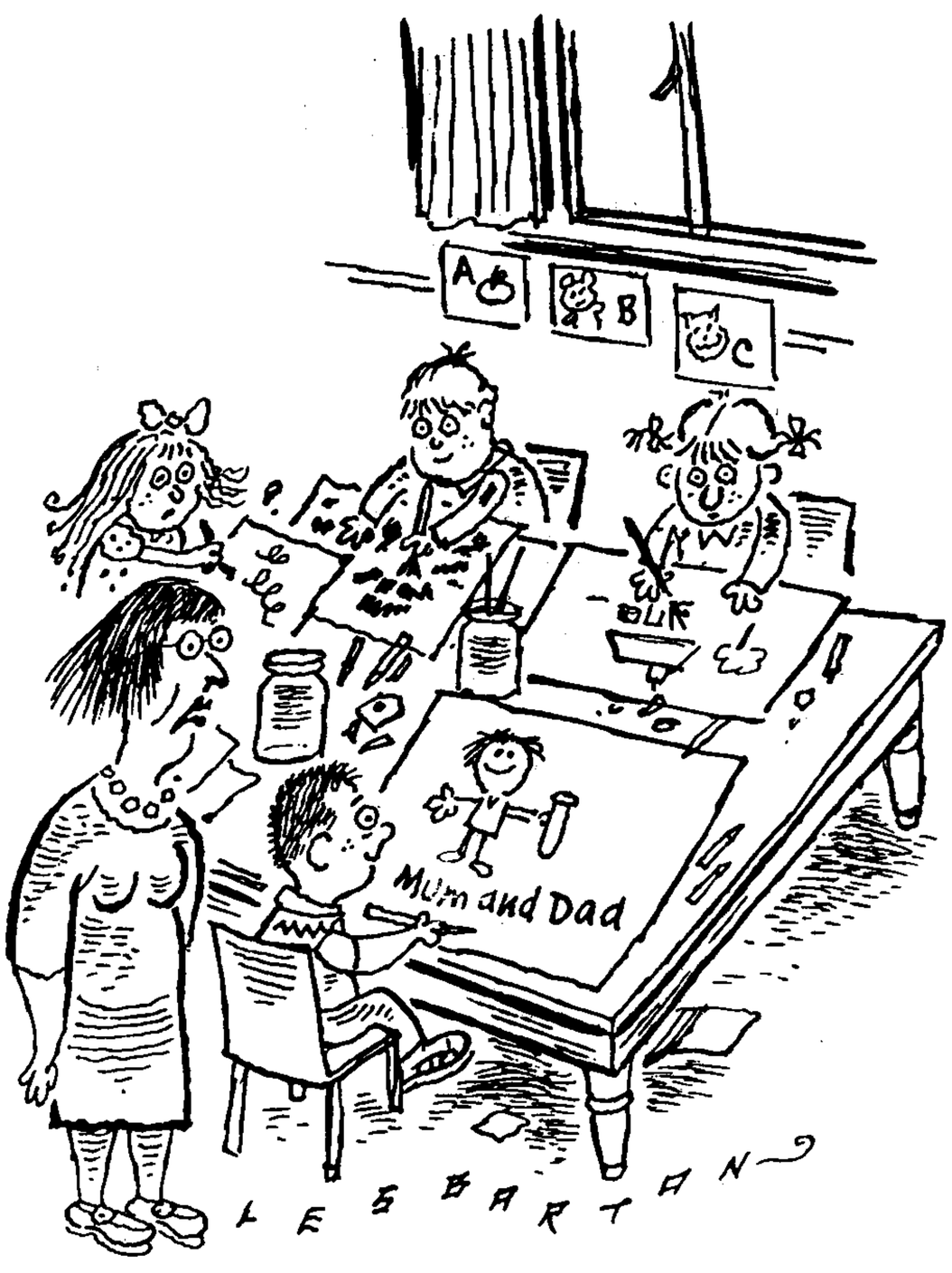
Thatchners

"It's a disgrace," bemoaned a member of the public who had regularly bought the Tory party line over the years. "I thought I was getting genuinely good quality but now it seems I've been conned."

Calls for Mr Major's resignation followed a sharp dip in his group's share price, and the boss himself has been forced to make a clarification.

"I was only joking," said Mr Major, reading from a prepared statement. "When I said that our previous policies were crap I meant that they were a firm base on which to build a new and vigorous classless Britain."

Gerald Ratner is 49.



THE EYE SAYS

HAVE THE Brussels Bureaucrats gone stark staring bonkers? They've been trying to ban Britain's favourite flavours from the traditional British crisp! How dare these snail-scoffing Spaniards and garlic-guzzling Germans tell us what to eat in the privacy of our own pubs?!

From now on, thanks to the madmen of Europe, you will not be allowed to eat the following flavours of crisp:

- **Lager**
- **Cigarette**
- **Rottweiler**
- **Hydrochloric Acid**
- **Nitro 'n' Glycerine**
- **Heroin**
- **Quentin**

(That's enough crisps, Ed.)

Knacker named as Britain's number one Nazi hunter

by Our War Crimes Staff

INSPECTOR "Knacker of the Yard" Knacker was last night named as head of Scotland Yard's new crack 500-strong "Nazibusters" squad, which over the next 30 years will track down the millions of Nazi war criminals known to be still living in Britain.

"This is a very challenging and exciting assignment," said Inspector Knacker last night, "and it will come as a welcome change to fighting Britain's soaring crime rate by handing out Neighbourhood Watch stickers to old ladies."

The Eichmann Cometh

"It will probably be the longest and most thorough investigation ever carried out by the Met," said the controversial inspector, "except the ones we conduct into our own corruption.

"My men will first have to undergo a five-year training course, which will involve them all becoming fluent in Lithuanian, Latvian and whatever other languages these war criminals may be speaking.

"My men will then have orders to infiltrate the Nazi gangs which have been set up in a number of retirement homes in Scotland and Bradford, so as to win the confidence of these war criminals and trap them into damaging reminiscences about what precisely they were doing on the afternoon of 20th July 1944, when they were allegedly taking part in a whist drive at Morecambe to raise funds for the WVS.

"Above all," said the inspector, his voice rising to a hysterical crescendo, "we shall expect full cooperation from the British public in hunting down these vermin, so that we can exterminate them forever from our midst, in accordance with the solemn wishes of our former Führer, Herr Adolf Thatch.

"We shall be issuing every household in ze land viz Nazi Watch stickers, so zat zey are keeping ze sharp look out for anyone buying piano wire, Frankfurter sausages or recordings of Wagner conducted by Herbert von Karajan.

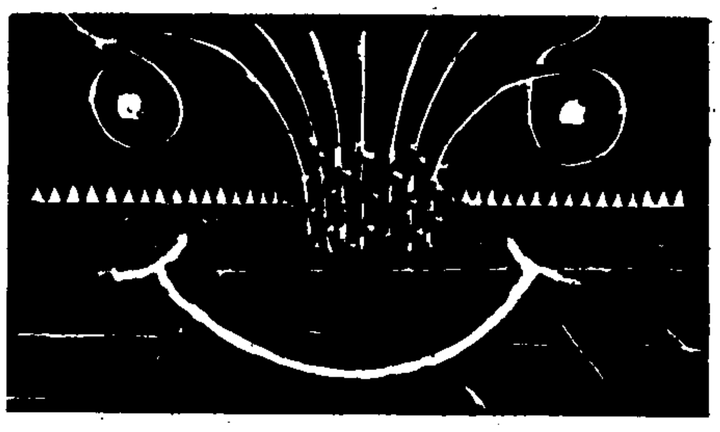
"One final word of warning, Englanders. If you meet one of zese dangerous war criminals, whatever you do, do not hef a go."

Lord Shawcross is 89.

HMI found that PE was taught in all the schools visited and received sufficient emphasis in almost three-quarters of them. Standards of work were satisfactory of better in about town-thirds of lessons.

Dept. of Education & Science

DIARY



PETER MAYLE

I opened the door in my old, stc *Provence* home to find a marvellous *character Français* standing there before me. With hi g, ginger beard, his sunlit, cheeky eyes, a dir d Gitanes poking from his rustic, asparagu ed mouth, and two spare adjectives rustling iis grubby, voluminous pockets, I knew at or ho he was. He was a magnificent old *Prov e* peasant I had just made up, and he seeme ry happy to see me.

"*Bonjour, Monsieur Peter,*' croaked, the string of onions swinging to fro from his beret, occasionally knocking tl ttle of Pernod from his *main*.

"*Bonjour*, amusing Frencl racter," I said. He grinned a toothless grin. in *Provence*, they simply adore being a sed on equal terms by retired execut with jocular spectacles. "And what have brought for me *aujourd'hui*?"

He reached deep into h nting sack and pulled out what looked like y old sock. Over a glass of wine (or two!) I a nim what it was. "It is what we *en Provence* a dirty old sock', *Monsieur*," he beamed, go turedly.

"And what, may I as said, the clear, *Provençale* sunlight play ff the oil on my aubergine, "am I to do w *mon ami*?"

"Why, *monsieur*," re the gorgeous old character with a canny, ring grin, "Make a chapter out of it for *voti* st book!"

Generously, I leant rd and poured him another half-glass of th l tapwater. I then sat down to write of the cu , amusing time when a delightful old chara ppeared at the door with an old sock in h k. And to think they said nothing ever hap d *ici*!

off," they replied, their English improving in leaps and bounds.

We have always found the everyday curiosities of French rural life amusing and interesting. From their smallest gestures, we realise that we have been accepted by the local community on our own terms. Everywhere we go — whether it is to buy *du pain* from *la boucherie* or to eat *boeuf en croûte* at the local *pharmacie* — they signal to us their pleasure in our company. They do this not with words, nor even with smiles, but with a single loving gesture. Placing their forefingers in the air and clenching their fists, they move their hands up and down in a swift, jerky rhythm. And, I might add, their sincerity cannot be doubted, for I have often caught sight of them performing this delightful ceremony, even while our backs are turned.

The *Provençale* is a simple yet complicated person, sometimes very tall yet often very small, with a great many of them fairly normal in stature. He likes to chat, yet he is also at times strangely silent. He is a creature of the outdoors, but often takes shelter in the home. He has a love of the sun, but has been known to be more than grateful for a drop of rain. He is an unabashed family man, yet he can sometimes be seen quite alone. A study of this often incorrigible, sometimes exasperating, always loveable creature would, I suspect, take a lifetime, yet how much more fascinating it is to nuzzle up to one *Provençal* builder caked in sweat, than to endure the boorishness, tedium and sheer vulgarity of the old friends one left behind!

Monsieur Bogusse arrived on our dorrstep the other day. No one could be more typical than he. He speaks that special type of French so characteristic of the natives in my books: for much of the time he speaks in perfect English, but every now and then he reminds you that he is *Provençale* by inserting a "*celui ci*" or an "*oh, la la*".

Monsieur Bogusse has a larged waxed moustache of which he is inordinately proud. He wears a beret and a blue-and-white striped jersey, smells of garlic, rides a bicycle very dangerously, carries a French loaf behind each ear and whistles *La Marseillaise* as he gesticulates from behind a glass of rough peasant wine. In my book, he is as real as they come.

"*Bonjour*, Monsieur Bogusse!" I exclaimed. "And what brings you *ici*, this cheery May morn?"

"Monsieur Mayle," he said, "You are a — 'ow you say? — *smugtwat*."

"*Merci*, Monsieur Bogusse," I replied, promising myself to look up that puzzler *smugtwat* in my invaluable French/English dictionary. But I have learnt in Provence that there is a language beyond words, and I could tell from his look that, as a representative of the local community, he was bestowing upon me the highest form of Gallic praise.

"And I want your *argent*," he said, a broad smile darkening his rugged features.

Around this time of year, ancient Provençal tradition dictates that one or more chaps from the local community get together to visit the foreigner's beautiful old home. Then, with hand outstretched, they request cash, folklore suggesting that this will ensure the survival of the beautiful old home throughout the coming four seasons. Happily entering into the spirit of this delicious old tradition, I handed over my wallet. In return, I received the customary trophy of a marvellous piece of *le gob* jettisoned from the mouth of Monsieur Bogusse with native accuracy straight onto the toe of my Clark's Leisurewear Sunsoak Sandal.

Looking down, I noted with excitement that the shape, colour and texture of *le gob* were just like the truffle soaked in oil and green pepper I had enjoyed the day before at *Le Petit Bistro Solange* run by the estimable Madame Valerie. It was then that I remembered that Monsieur Bogusse was her Head Chef. Ah, *le cuisine de la campagne! Toujours, Provence*, I thought to myself, and, even more super from all my readers' point of view, *Toujours Peter Mayle*.

There are many wise sayings handed down from one g ion of walnut-skinned rogues to the nex r a time spent in their company, gaining ust, affection and admir- ation, I have been a cull much wisdom from these horny-hande timers. One of them op- ened the letter-hat our marvellous old front- door last week, a louted through it, "You know, Peter, we ha old saying — 'Books sell best in the Autum get more coverage in the Spring.' It was Mc Jeff from my publishers in London, alive, a ys, to the ebb and flow of the rhythms of th ons. I introduced him to Marcel and Geor ny trusty builders. "*Piss*

● Mr and Mrs Ri

Foulsham and Wendy Smith

lon Portrait

"Not much of an after-dinner speaker, is he?"

Literary Review

Big Jimmy riddle

The Burn: Stories
James Kelman
(Secker & Warburg, £13.99)

AULD JIM gits oot of bed. Turns aff the alarm cloak. The wife sleeping the while. Gis straight ben the study. Sits doon in that and gives a wee look at the typewriter. Isni any good. Couldni move bit. Just isni any fucking good, cunts telling you yir a genius and that. The Jim fella knows. Just isni any fucking good at all.

Wee bit of time gis by. Hears the papers come through the door. Gits oot and brings them back, turns over the book pages. There he is. Fucking big picture of the guy, like he was Goad or something. Just sitting there holding this toty wee wine glass. A fucking wine glass, man! Auld Jim has a bit laugh about that. Guys in the pub seeing him holding a wine glass! Fucking bogging literary celebrity man, it was a joke, it was fucking a joke. This yin in the *Independent* says he's "simply incomparable". Ah mean, whit the fuck does that mean, saying yir simply incomparable? Other yin talking about the Scots literary renaissance, ah mean, whit a fucking carry on, eh?

Wee bit more time gis by. This Jim fella gis another squint it the typewriter. Isni any good, isni any fucking good at all. Hears the wife. Comes in and that ti stick oan the kettle. Sees auld Jim sitting there. Hasni started. Fucking advance out the windi. Goodnis sake Jim, she shouts, yir offi late.

Am no bothered.

Wife says: was this cunt writing in the *Guardian* saying youse the new James Joyce, did you ken that big fella?

Am no surprised.

Wife gis out agen. Jim sits ther, yonin. Stares at the bookshelf. All of them lined up there man, toty wee books in long fucking rows, a fucking *oeuvre*. *The Bus-Conductor Hines*. *Not Not While The Giro*. *A Chancer*. Aye, that was a fucking good one, right enough. Was whin he wrote *A Disaffection* all the fucking trouble started, fucking Booker Prize shortlisting and folk thinking Jim now, he's fucking sellt himself out the while, be down the Guildhall next wearing a wee dinner jacket, but he wasni doing it for the money, he just wasni, and he wasno goan to wear no fucking dinner jacket neither. Ah, fucking banalities, ye just say them.

Looks oot the windi. Sees the wife taking the kids to school and that. Postman gis by up the path. Decent and leisurely process of the public mails yr lordship. Hears the letter come down oan the mat. Goad love us, another fucking cheque. It was just a fucking joke, fucking a joke the money they sent him and, Christ almighty, he felt so fucking bad, so fucking bad.

Coupla hours gis by. The wife comes in. Says: was this cunt on the phone wanting to know about a wee interview for the TV.

Ah couldni. Not with this fucking writer's block, I just couldni.

Could ye no write something else? Could ye no write a TV play, maybe, that the lassies could watch?

Fuck it, he says. Ah've got ma integrity ti think oaf. Fucking cunts'd eddit out most of the words.

Yir soft too, says the wife. Man, is awnly getting money out of the fucking English.

Auld Jim feels better. Sits doon ben the table, picks up the wee pen, starts writing another toty piece, aye, as if his fucking life depended on it.

Books & Bookmen

☐ **THE SAGA of Lord Thatcher's wife's memoirs continues — and she is no nearer finding a solvent publisher.**

Lady Thatch had hoped the Digger would oblige but was furious at an article in the *Sundry Times* suggesting that son Mark was alienating all interested agents and publishers. At least the *Sunset Times* was nearer the mark in suggesting who was doing the wheeling and non-dealing: the *Observer*'s Richard Brooks' managed to come up with Mark McCormack.

Having dispensed with the services of Tim Bell, Lady Thatcher has now got rid of his successor as memoirwallah, Andy Bearpark. George Weidenfeld says he is still eager to publish the great book or books, but then he's getting desperate.

■ *NEITHER can Cap'n Bob find a buyer for Macdonald and Sphere, which he'd far rather have sold than his first love, Pergamon. He's still hunting, but this explains why recently departed managing director Nick Webb is not being replaced, his job being absorbed into that of sales director, John O'Connor. The skids are always under a publishing house when a salesman is put in overall command.*

☐ THE CURRENT *Bookseller* carries no fewer than eight pages of advertisements giving the names and addresses of "The new Sales Force" so that booksellers may discover who is supposed to be providing them with HarperCollins books.

Efficiency at Bangkok House is such that virtually all the top executives recently went on holiday simultaneously and the only thought they had collectively was that the recent purges were insufficient. The place is still overstaffed and overstuffed (sorry, Arturo), especially for a publishing house whose proprietor, the aforementioned Digger, cannot find a buyer anywhere in the world. Further redundancies should be announced in June.

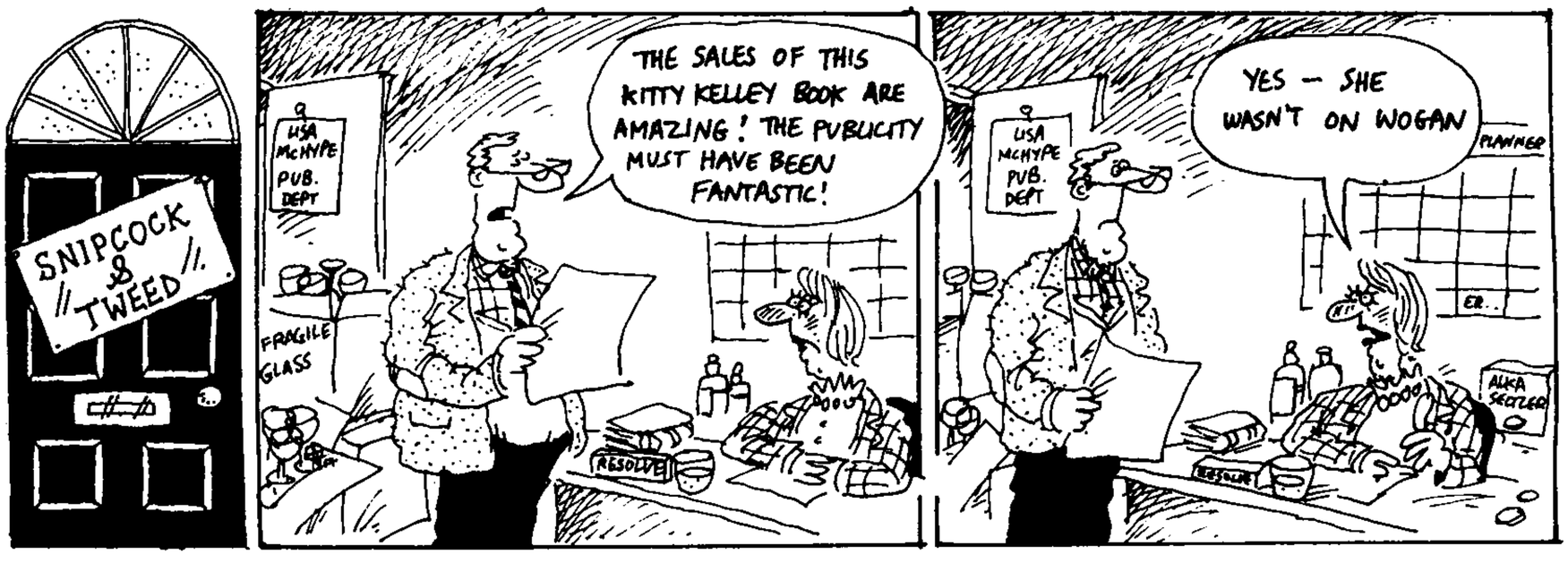
■ ELEPHANTIASIS set in with Timothy Mo in his last novel, *An Insular Possession* — and the new one is just as bad.

But the disease is spreading from Mo's head to his wallet. First he dumped agent Deborah Rogers in favour of Caradoc King and managed to get Carmen Calil to pay a staggering £250,000 for *The Redundancy of Courage*. And now he has told King not to accept £75,000 for his novel in the United States. He is so sure he will win the Booker Prize, he has told King to wait — and then get £500,000 for it.

☐ THE *Independent*'s Robert Windbag in a famous article revealed that more biographies are published in the UK than novels. As if to endorse this notion, this year's judges of the NCR award for the best non-fiction book have come up with a shortlist of five titles (they are apparently not very good at arithmetic, as they were asked to come up with four), four of which are biographies.

There's Hilary Spurling's meandering biography of *Raj Quartet* wallah Paul Scott, and TV mogul Denis Forman's autobiography. Could the fact that the five judges include old television warhorses Ludicrous Kennedy and Robert Kee, as well as newsreader Julia Sommerville, have anything to do with telly logrolling? Surely not. There's Peter Ackroyd (the thinking man's Barbara Cartland) on Dickens (he didn't go to bed with Ellen Ternan); and Claire Tomalin on Dickens (he *did* go to bed with ET). The fifth title is Mark Frankland's *The Patriots' Revolution*, which presumably will win. The other judges are the K-men's chum Angela Huth and stiffupperlip Robin Lane-Fox.

'Bookworm'



Electricity

How ( ) you l :e your :ake?

ASTRA in the of Nat who fought to ! during the coa branch to erst Scargill.

Their purpose Workers Against shows how despe executive of Pow Both men appare protection.

John Baker r half-privatised el has been overhea imagine how reli power. It caused And to the comp had difficulty fin electricity was c

Baker and W Central Electricit to be ardent defe ran a nuclear pov while Baker app explain that he w and safe. But the away from them needs a subsidy t

Electricity bi contain a big nuc per cent of the c fossil fuel, whic year the handout been judged insu Littlechild, head Regulation). Ne

When electri of Energy proud would be shown first time, custor extra (if anythin anything" was a

This promis show how much had been privati department now electricity comp according to Ofl Parkinson's sole reason is that it

On a quarte home, about £7 nuclear electrici nuclear levy. So electricity. It me electricity costs produced by co pays the cost.

This does n favourable light would like to g particularly as a promotion cam electricity as a with dirty coal- Arthur.

Wallis has a extension of the the Oldbury on them shut dow such an idea.

Arthur will for his member power generat up pollution fr FGD (flue gas more acceptabl will, as origina

new alliance is forming y industry: the leaders Power and PowerGen, the lights burning e, have offered an olive bogeyman Arthur

reate a United Front of r Power. And in a gesture that y are, Ed Wallis, chief invited Scargill out to lunch. k colleagues along for

ile, boss of the other bit of the y industry, National Power, ng intimates that they can't was to get shot of nuclear thing but problems, he says. f environmentalists that they it just how much nuclear Baker replies: "So did I." top people inside the old rating Board, were required f nuclear power. Wallis even ion himself (Oldbury in Avon) efore the Sizewell inquiry to t because it was cheap, clean uclear stations were taken ven to Nuclear Electric, which hem.

out to 20 million customers vy: an extra payment of 10.6 e electricity generated by per cent of total output. This d £1.2bn, but even this has t by Professor Stephen er (the Office of Electricity it rises to 11 per cent. as privatised, the Department unced that the nuclear levy tely on bills so that "for the ll be able to see how much pay for diversity". ("If uch.)

lished by Cecil Parkinson to it would be when the CEGB s been abandoned. The is up to each regional decide whether to do it and, a single one is fulfilling dge of open practice. The complicated".

of £100 for the all-electric fossil electricity, £17 for the remaining £8 for the kes get £25 for £17 worth of it every unit of nuclear y 47 per cent more than a unit nd every home in the country

electricity appear in a ational Power and PowerGen of the nuclear hand-out — the money is used to finance designed to show nuclear the environment compared ations. Hence the appeal to

started to campaign against any the old Magnox stations (like rsonally managed). He wants he would like Arthur to support

agree, but he wants something start, he would like the two it serious money into cleaning r coal-fired stations by installing urisation) plant to make coal erGen is reluctant to say that it nded, install the equipment at its huge Ferrybridge plant where it will cost £500 million. It might prefer to import low-sulphur coal and build more gas turbines, whatever that does for unemployment, the balance of payments and pollution.

With all these problems besetting the industry, one can see why Lord Hanson said thanks but no thanks at the chance to buy PowerGen. But what unites the generators and Scargill is that Nuclear Electric, British Nuclear Fools and the Atomic Energy Authority are still manoeuvring to put up more nuclear power stations in 1994 when the Government is due to reconsider.

● **AS THE Chernobyl disaster passed its fifth anniversary last month, reassessments of its cause give few grounds for confidence in the British nuclear industry's repeated assertion that such a catastrophe could never have happened here.**

Soviet experts now agree that the design of the RBMK reactor, which made it inherently unstable at low power, was more to blame than operator error, the reason given by the Soviet authorities immediately after the accident.

What made the RBMK so unpredictable was something called a "positive void coefficient". Two of the reactors operated by the UK Atomic Energy Authority suffer the same problem — the steam-generating heavy water reactor at Winfrith in Dorset and the prototype fast reactor at Dounreay in the north of Scotland.

The authority shut down Winfrith abruptly last year — two years earlier than planned — but Dounreay will continue until 1994.

Brussels Sprouts

ECU what a scorcher!

YET MORE evidence emerges from Brussels of the total shambles that is the European Commission (EC), the unelected hyper-bureaucracy that will soon replace Britain's near obsolete Parliament.

The commission's latest idiocy has been to help the overseas delegations of a strange subsidiary called the European Association for Cooperation (EAC) to pocket millions of ECUs from European taxpayers.

EAC, founded in 1964, is under the control of the commission's director-general for development of communications of the European Communities (*sic*) and aims to recruit, pay for, administer and provide support for technical assistance personnel working in Third World countries, as well as to oversee the grants, scholarships and fellowships awarded to Third World citizens studying in Europe.

To achieve these aims, overseas delegations are set up to represent the EC. They are financed with taxpayers' cash, paid into their respective bank accounts.

Confusion began when the Eurocrats decided it would be simpler to pay all the funds into one account, held at the commission, instead of into the 470 bank accounts held by the 100 official members of the overseas delegations. A plan was thus hatched to transfer all EAC funds to the commission in January 1988, and the commission was quick to open its new account.

Sadly, though, EAC funds and assets were not transferred until April 1990, which meant that for 13 months both the commission account and the 470 accounts of the overseas delegations were being replenished for the same purpose.

Confused officials of the EC's financial watchdog, the Court of Auditors, trying to unravel the shambles could only conclude with certainty that more money had been paid out since 1988 than ever before, though they could not be sure where it had gone.

Accounts like those of the Burundi delegation, for example, were paid double the normal amount, while others like Mauritania rocketed to 1.4 million ECUs. One strange Third World affiliate, the Washington delegation, did not simplify matters by transmitting its expenses a year late.

The auditors pointed out that if the commission had simply added and subtracted sums from an inventory made on the official date of transfer of EAC's assets, everything would have been quite clear. But, due no doubt to its excessive workload, neither the Eurocrats, nor the EAC delegation personnel, nor the EAC administrative council (which controls EAC's budget) had time to itemise the accounts. Court officials therefore found a "total absence of enumeration of assets, figures and formal taking-over of the assets and liabilities absorbed at the date the operation was affected."

Their investigations started badly when they noticed that, during 1988, the amount of funds paid into the commission EAC account was 1.5 million ECUs (about £1,200,000) more than the sums paid into the accounts of the EAC delegations.

By 1990 they discovered that some of the 470 EAC delegation accounts had credit balances totalling 1.4 million ECUs (£1,150,000), while others were mysteriously overdrawn to the tune of 2.8 million ECUs (£2,100,000).

Since the total amount of funds lost cannot be estimated, the Court of Auditors has now concluded that: "The commission's balance sheet does not reflect the true situation."

Diplomacy

General Hospital

AFTER Saddam Hussein, General Ne Win, Burma's military dictator since 1958, is perhaps the most internationally condemned figure in the world.

The United Nations has commissioned a report on human rights abuses in his country; since the 1988 uprising there the European Commission has cut off financial aid; and the British Government has axed all existing development programmes in Burma, including medical and humanitarian ones. "We are deeply concerned about the appalling record of the Burmese military regime since the violent repression in 1988," says the Foreign Office.

It may therefore come as a shock to the Foreign Office and to London's Riverside Health Authority to discover that the consultant neuropathologist at the Charing Cross (Fulham) Hospital enjoys a close relationship with General Ne Win.

It was Dr Lewis who, back in 1987, arranged Ne Win's secret visit to London for medical treatment. Ne Win, who has one of those embarrassingly decadent "western" diseases, spent some time at the private residence of the Burmese military attaché in London (in Parkside, Wimbledon SW19). There Dr Lewis met Ne Win, arranged for doctors to treat him and then attended a lavish, hush-hush reception given by the now cured general at Claridges where Dr Lewis met him again. He met him for a third time in Rangoon at Christmas.

Dr Lewis describes himself as an informal fixer for Burmese doctors coming to Britain looking for work. As well as working at the Charing Cross Hospital, he works at the Commonwealth Building at the Royal Post Graduate Medical School, Hammersmith.

In the light of the Government's cessation of dealings with the brutal Burmese regime, one might expect that the Commonwealth Building has dealings solely with exiled doctors, or perhaps members of Burma's long-suffering opposition, the National League for Democracy. But far from it. Later this year, Dr Lewis is arranging for two Burmese doctors to come to Hammersmith. Both are working at the Military Hospital in Rangoon and both are employed in government services there.

The Commonwealth Building, of course, has a special place in Ne Win's heart and the affection is mutual. A few years back, his wife was cured there of an unknown ailment. Ne Win was so chuffed he gave a huge donation to the place.

Despite a token resignation following the 1988 uprising, Ne Win still runs Burma. His barbarous regime had been perpetrating numerous human rights atrocities long before 1988 when the world suddenly became concerned. Today, the National League for Democracy, which polled more than 80 per cent in the recent elections, remains without power. Its leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, is under house arrest and hasn't been seen for months. Many other opposition leaders have been imprisoned or killed by the military regime since the elections.

In the City

SO. Now we know. All the time that Ernest Saunders was running the legal and illegal game plans to takeover Distillers, all the three years he was defending himself in and out of court, he was really evidencing pre-senile dementia. His problem was not near demented paranoia about persecution and a failure to face the facts, but dementia and an inability to *remember* the facts. Not Waldheimer's Disease, after all, but Alzheimer's Disease. Not bad but mad.

This remarkable diagnosis emerged by no coincidence for the first time in the Court of Appeal where the former Guinness chief executive is appealing against his conviction and five-year prison sentence last August. The judges have yet to rule on that appeal. But while it may not help on the conviction, it could well mean that Saunders will not after all be left alone in Ford Open Prison when his partner in crime, former stockbroker Anthony Parnes (*see Grovel*), leaves next month following the release of Gerald Ronson in February. Saunders would normally be due to stay inside until February 1992.

Equally unsurprising was the fact that the medical news — supported by three out of four doctors — was accompanied by the now familiar emotive pictures of a broken Saunders accompanied by his loyal daughter. Such family togetherness was a well-known tactic before and during the trial to go with the photo opportunities of a pathetic, disconsolate, penniless Saunders travelling on the London Underground or waiting for a bus.

This is not the first time a Guinness defendant has suddenly been pronounced to be suffering from mental problems. At an early stage in his examination by the Department of Trade & Industry inspectors, Jack Lyons was revealed to be suffering from an extremely rare form of amnesia which made it very difficult for him — a man past 70, unlike Saunders who is still not 60 — to remember anything related to Guinness, large cheques or offshore bank accounts. (Lyons very wisely chose not to appeal his conviction and £3 million fine but no jail time.) Clearly this condition must have been contagious.

While it is clearly not possible to dispute the evidence of cerebral abnormalities revealed by the recent brain scan, it would seem reasonable, as the prosecution's medical expert suggested, not to jump to conclusions based on that and the observations made by Saunders' three experts, only one of which had seen him on a regular basis since he was jailed.

Also what did not seem to be fully addressed by any medical expert — other than a desire to "over perform" in order to compensate — was Saunders' bravura performance during the 113-day trial, in particular during his 18 days in the witness box. None of the experts witnessed that epic. At no time during those days of examination and cross-examination did Saunders ever evidence the "where am I, who are you, what's this all about?" symptoms described to the Court of Appeal. This was not Rudolf Hess at Nuremburg.

On the contrary he was always demonstrating his claimed almost total recall of the events of the 1986 bid battle and of his previous testimony during the trial. There were no sudden lapses into silence or amnesia or embarrassing "Daisy, Daisy" interludes. He illustrated no difficulties in following the arguments put to him, although at times choosing wrong turnings to his perceived advantage.

And in his dealing with those in court when not testifying, Saunders never illustrated anything other than total control and consistency with the scapegoat persona that was central to his 'Nightmare' defence.

There never was any suggestion by him or his lawyers that Saunders was other than mentally alert, *except* when it came to explaining how he had come to make certain statements under oath to the DTI and in affidavits during 1987 which he now denied were the truth. That lead to the calling for the defence of his Swiss family doctor, Dr Eric Rochat, who had treated him for severe depression in early 1987 soon after he had been sacked by Guinness. Dr Rochat said Saunders had been in a state of "deep psychological depression", "an intellectually broken man", in a state of "confusion and helplessness". Saunders had been talking to himself, it was not possible to have a normal conversation, he could not answer simple questions and was having difficulty in shaving and dressing.

This state might appear somewhat akin to that reported by the doctors who examined him after his conviction. (A Doctor writes: Severe depression can often result in similar symptoms to pre-senile dementia such as loss of memory, inability to concentrate and absence of a sense of self-worth.)

Interestingly Saunders himself remembered very little of what Dr Rochat described when questioned. Dr Rochat ascribed that to a "psychological blocking of memories". He did, however, remember during a 25-minute reexamination a great deal about his own and his wife's medical histories, all the way back to fears of fainting at Cambridge. Again there was little or no reference to the now revealed 1988 visits for problems of depression to one of the three doctors who say he is suffering pre-senile dementia. But then that might not have been as helpful with the jury as dementia could be now with the judges.

Ernest Saunders has always been a manipulator. He manipulated his family to generate sympathy. He manipulated the press before and after his fall. He tried to manipulate the jury with less success. Whether he is now trying to manipulate the judges into releasing him it is not possible to say. But what is possible to say is that he could never face the truth or take responsibility for his actions and when he fell off the flat earth he had created, unlike those who rob with shotguns, not fountain pens, Ernest Saunders was unable to face the unwritten law that if you can't do the time don't do the crime.

AN INTERESTING theory circulates surrounding the pro-Tory *Daily Mail*'s hatchet job last month on besieged ADT chairman and party supporter Michael Ashcroft (*see Colour Section*). It is suggested that the aim is to create a climate in which the Tory hierarchy — Thatcher, Parkinson, Baker — can have reason to distance themselves from their erstwhile friend and party benefactor. Such distance could be particularly valuable come election time if by then the watching brief on ADT held by the authorities has turned into a live investigation of the allegations about profit, asset and share price manipulation.

FURTHER information has emerged concerning Stakis, its two London casinos and the Gaming Board.

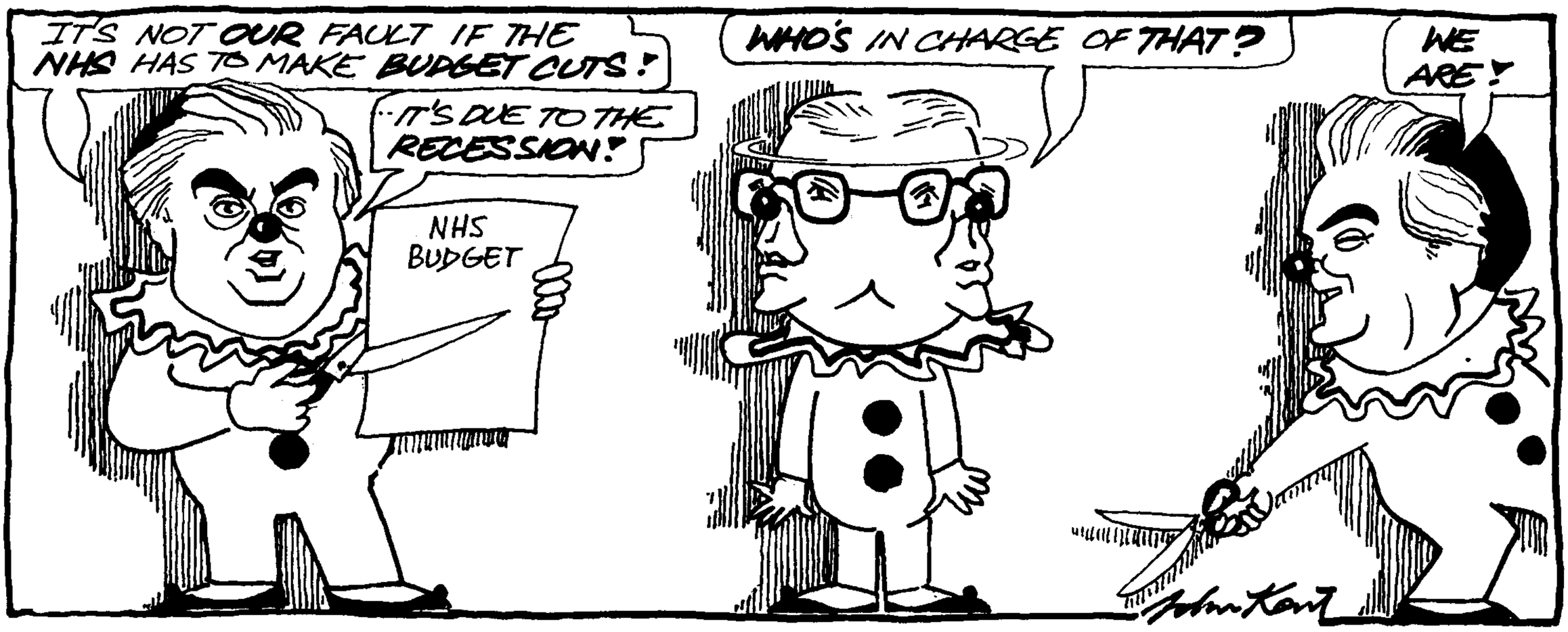
It seems that there are those who suggest that the suspension in January of Soterios Scholarios, head of London operations, may have been influenced by a power struggle within the management of the Regency and Barrucuda casinos. He is the son of Fivos Scholarios, a senior Stakis executive and associate of founder Sir Reo Stakis.

Scholarios was suspended after he took three Chinese gamblers he knew from the Regency to the Barracuda where two of them, despite being non-members, attempted to gamble. Scholarios said he had warned them they could not play.

Evidence of this and other alleged breaches of the Gaming Act, together with certain complaints about Scholarios and former Barracuda general manager Thomas Lloyd, have been the subject of an internal investigation and have seemingly found their way to the Gaming Board whose investigators were already concerned about the excess facility book at the Regency.

These matters and the implications are still being considered by the board and Stakis, while Scholarios is said to be considering legal action.

'Slicker'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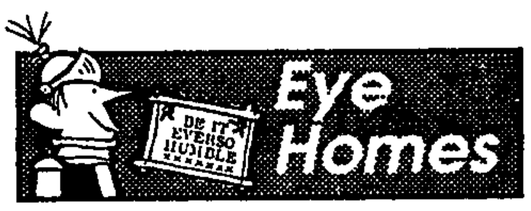

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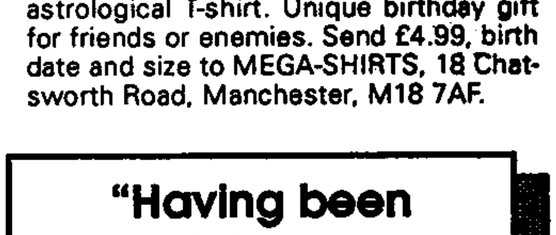

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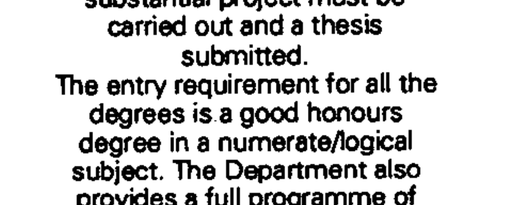

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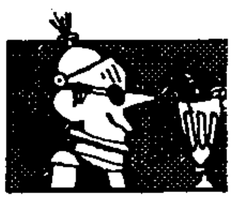

SKYE. Secluded s cottage. Sleeps
four. 047 022-231.

SAMPLE THE DEI not only of my
very personally r ı-plastic" hotel
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wishing donation hing. PLEASE!
Box 13267.

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swim, walk on ou ı the mountains
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holiday courses in of all flying and
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CLIFFTOP Edwardian house — overlooks sea and sandy beaches on Roseland peninsula. Sleeps 8-plus. Some summer dates still available — phone 042 482 404.

FANTASTIQUE! 3 more girls and two guys, 18-25, for high achievers. French vacancies. Box 13067.

PHOTOGRAPHIC American holidays in comfort — whale-watching, Grand Canyons. VIEWFINDER 0730 66588.

EXPLORERS EXPEDITIONS. A small private company specialising in Trans-Africa overland. 6-27 weeks from £350 to £1,370. Phone 071-485 4720/0633 257561 for brochure.

SAILING WEEKENDS, weeks, days, experienced skipper, reasonable rates 0923 283855.

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ASIA, AFRICA, SOUTH AMERICA overland expeditions. UK to Kathmandu, 9, 13 or 15 weeks. UK to Nairobi 20 weeks, to Harare 26 weeks. Nairobi to Harare 5 weeks. S America 6 to 23 weeks. Turkey, M. East, Egypt 8 weeks. New colour brochure. DRAGOMAN (PE), 8 Camp Green, Debenham, Suffolk IP4 6LA. 0728 861133 (24 hrs).

SLEEPY SUFFOLK is ideal cycling country. Gentle landscapes and unspoiled coast, country pubs and historic buildings. Luggage transported. SUFFOLK CYCLE BREAKS. 0449 721555 for brochure.

ALGARVE. Lagos. Desirable tranquil luxurious poolside apartments. No children. 0702-524950.

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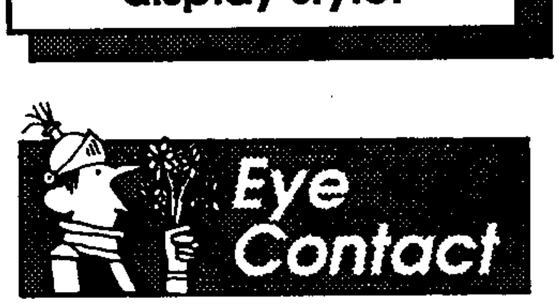
TRUCK AFRICA 5 to 7 months overland to Kenya/Zimbabwe from £1360. 5 weeks Kenya to Zimbabwe from £395 — regular departures. 4 weeks Morocco overland August 91 from £345. Please call 071-731 6142 anytime.

AFRICA EXPLORED. 8-week (£560) and 20-week (£1050) overland African expeditions. Phone 0633 853289 for brochures.

THAILAND/PHILIPPINES. Intense and uninhibited, a singles paradise! For brochure ring 048182 3417.

The first one or two words of all ads are in bold type at no extra charge.
For extra capital letters, bold type and centering choose the slightly dearer semi-display style.



SQUASH PLAYERS should contact SQUASHMANS CLUB 070 279650. Membership of 293 clubs for £25.

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The way to meet unattached professional men and women.
Telephone Roz on 0298-26940.

PENPALS WORLDWIDE for interesting correspondence, lasting friendships, maybe more. Details and sample photos free! Hermes Korrespondenz-Verlag, Box 110660/S, Berlin 11, Germany.

DINNER DATES We give wonderful dinner parties at top London restaurants; The Savoy, Stringfellows, Mortons etc. Have fun and meet equal numbers of men and women of similar ages and interests. Please telephone 081-741 1252/1173.

VALENTINE tele-dating. Just listen on 0898 228722. Calls cost 33p min cheap, 44p other times.

MOSCOW CONNECTION represent 400 cultured Russian females, doctors, teachers, musicians, etc, seeking happiness with similar caring, marriage-minded gentlemen. 081-505 4095.

"THIS PICTURE DATING idea is brilliant", Capital Radio. We will send you introductions with photos. For details of our successful service for professional people call: 071-734 5567 (day), 081-297 1424 (anytime).

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The Pen Pal club with a difference! Make new connections at home and abroad.
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CZECH MATE World's first anglo-Czechoslovakian agency. Hundreds of stunning ladies, lawyers, doctors, architects and chemists seeking marriage. 0582 25960.

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MARGARET'S PEN CLUB — make new friends today. Age groups 16-76. All areas. S.A.E. details. P.O. Box 1, Prestwick, Ayrshire, KA9 1RJ.

ASIAN INTRODUCTIONS. Tel: 0533 610266.

HUNGRY for companionship? Meet single ladies at lavish London restaurant parties. "MEET 'N' EAT": 071-629 5534.

PENFRIENDS — USA. Make lasting friendships through correspondence. Send age, interests. Free reply. HARMONY, Box 82295PE, Phoenix, Arizona 85071, USA.

ATHLETIC MALE graduate, 24, with outdoor interests and intellectual pretensions seeks similar female in London area to make sense of life's crazed intensity. Box 13866.

ATTRACTIVE WIDOW, 62, likes travel, books, would like to meet gentleman for a sensible relationship. Rye/Hastings area. Box 14266.

NOT JUST hot air! Male travel executive (41) in UK (for good) after 15 years in the USA, living in the country 45 mins from London. I'm looking for a special lady to settle down with and share dining out, cooking in, going to the pub, hot air ballooning, travel, cats, music, lazy Sunday newspapers and other stuff. I look OK, beard, 5ft 10, thin. You will be 28-40ish, have a good sense of humour, be your own lady, attractive and intelligent. Who ever thought we'd meet like this? Kent/Surrey/Sussex/London. Send photo if you like. Box 14366.

GOOD LOOKING MALE, 30, own house, seeks slim, attractive younger female to enjoy better things in life with (send photo). Box 14466.

RETURNED EX-PAT. 60+ widower, tall, W. Yorks. Squander your savings on a stamp, ladies. Box 14566.

TALL, DARK, Welshman, 31, former Lampeter man, dissident Anglo-Catholic, seeks similar Welshwoman, 25-35, for country walks, exploring churches, retreats, companionship, romance. West Glam area/Wales/anywhere. No celibate vocation, so please write! Box 14666.

SPORTY, BLOND, London-lady, 50, with disinterested husband, wishes to meet educated, healthy, well groomed man to share spare-time, holidays and energy. Absolute discretion required. Box 14766.

MAN SOUGHT to relish and cherish me! I'm female, mid-30's, 5'9", attractive, average build (the only thing that is!), unattached, warm, optimist, intelligent, active, trustworthy, assertive, vulnerable, confident (mostly), non-smoker, individualistic (glad to stand out from the crowd), romantic, successful, working to live not vice versa. Looks matter but your smile matters more! You're like-minded, but is there chemistry? If you too have a sparkle in your eyes, why not meet? Photo appreciated/reciprocated. Box 14866.

PRETTY, SLIM, successful girl, late 20s, seeks sporty, attractive professional man with good sense of humour, age 28-34. Photograph appreciated. Box 14966.

MR POLLY seeks Christabel to re-write the history with love, laughter and children. Absolute confidentiality offered and expected. Box 15066.

SMALL, SLIM, curvey blonde, divorce imminent, seeks long term relationship. Non smoking gentleman, fifties, early sixties. Photo essential. Box 15166.

MID 30s professional man, discreet, presentable, staying married seeks counterpart-laughs, time out. Box 15266.

PROFESSIONAL, divorced, 47 years old, London man seeks single, pretty, slim, N/S, lady, 25-40, with a view to enjoying life — travel, food and theatre — but mainly fun. Box 15366.

ABELARD (32 London) seeks Eloise. Why do I have the impression this might not work out? Box 15466.

MALE, (21) tall, reserved, intelligent, decent looking, seeks female for romance, outings, etc. Photo please; my photo with all replies. Leicester region. Box 15566.

WHY AM I doing this? Tall, single, attractive, fit, professional Mr Nice Guy, 30s, perhaps you are the answer. Box 15666.

HAPPY, ATTRACTIVE slim, intelligent single mother, 37, seeks similar male for grown-up pastimes. Photo please. London. Box 15766.

SELF-SUFFICIENT professional bloke (30) seeks missing piece of jigsaw for pubbing, walking, theatre, holding onto. She who must be obeyed need not reply. Herts/Midlands, Box 15866.

RACEY REDHEAD in Hunters and Chanel No 5 seeks N/S attractive, available gentleman farmer/successful businessman (37-48) preferably PPL. Fitness or pacemaker essential. At home Grosvenor House or slug and lettuce. Slim, lively, educated lady likes outdoors and indoors. Please write with photo. Box 15966.

MALE, 33, new in town, unattached, has sense of humour, enjoys intelligent conversation, is non-acquisitive and retains that child-like preoccupation with living things. Seeks a warm, caring woman for genuine friendship. Hants/S. Central England. Box 16066.

GLASGOW, tall, slim, attractive, successful male, 29. Relocated, seeking good looking lady to bring romance back. Box 16166.

I'M FIVE; my dad's 50, and designs things. He says he's green, and likes skinny ladies and Bugattis. He's divorced, and needs someone special. (Lincoln). Box 16266.

HANDSOME, tall, professional, 27, seeks slim lady with brain for secret liaisons. London. Box 16366.

I WANT TO BE chased, not chaste! Tall, slim, attractive, gentlemanly lover (own teeth) required for happy, monogamous relationship some weeknights, mostly weekends. You have your house, I have mine, to avoid the indifference of cohabitation. I'm thirty-something, tall, attractive, successful, workaholic, independent, sensitive and affectionate and haven't been hugged for ages! Photo essential. Herts. Box 2365.

MISERABLE, LONELY, boring Aries, 31, tallish, dark, seeks female to share dull evenings, awkward silences. South Midlands. London. Box 16466.

CELIBACY'S NO fun! Guy, 30, attractive, intelligent, fun-loving, needs sincere, caring and romantic lady to share life, love and lasting friendship. Bedfordshire/Travel. Box 16566.

SINCERE MALE, athletic, professional, sportsman, 36, seeks older woman to wine and dine. Discretion assured. Photo please. Box 16666.

COME LIVE WITH ME and be my love in Cyprus. Sophisticated English professional gent, 60s, retiring to small village near sea and sand, seeks slim free spirit, 40+, photo essential. Box 4166.

DIRECTOR WITH GOOD LOOKS aged 38 and a successful career is now on his own. Would like to meet a very good-looking woman, feminine, under 32, who wears modern clothes and enjoys life and prefers a man to take the lead in a relationship. Photo and phone number appreciated. Box 7366.

QUIET, CHASTE, humorous single male graduate, youthful 33, own house, cheerful but rather lonely, seeks chaste girl, late 20s-ish (schoolteacher type?) for marriage and kids. Herts. Box 7666.

VIVACIOUS, glamorous blonde, seeks wealthy gentleman, for fun, adventure, laughter and to help with the mortgage. Box 16766.

SINGLE, SUCCESSFUL solicitor, slim, attractive, 34 with own international practice, planning 2 week tropical desert island holiday, designed to give up smoking. Seeks slim, blonde female , aged 25-35 who would like to do same. Box 16866

FEMALE (37), attractive, Left wing, woolly minded Guardian reader. Would like to meet a nice man (35-50). Herts/Bucks/N. London. Box 16966.

HANDSOME, 6 ft tall, fair, comfortable home, silly dog. Looking for attractive partner to help with microwave! Photo appreciated. Exeter. Box 17066.

BORED HOUSE husband seeks equally bored older woman for daytime fun. Age and looks unimportant. Just be wicked and solvent. Bucks, Oxon, Herts. Box 13666.

MALE 40s considered handsome by girlfriends' mothers seeks stunning, irresistible, slim lady 30s for fun/marriage. Photograph please. Surrey/Hampshire. Box 0167.

DIVORCED AND needing to feel young! Director, 40, wants girlfriend for !FUN! If you're 16-24 and like sports cars, send photo for date. Box 0267.

THREE ATTRACTIVE outgoing female graduates, mid 20s, seek like males for dinner parties in Fulham area. Box 0367.

ALL SINGLE, intelligent, women are in "ongoing" relationships. True or false? A single, professional Midlands male, 40, must know. Box 0467.

WILD, ADVENTUROUS, single woman (30) seeks to widen social circle. N. East. Box 0567.

GIRL, HAPPY, professional, busy, tall, mid-30s, many interests, looking for an unattached male friend. Box 0667.

ATTRACTIVE, MEDIA millionaire will whisk you off to luxury Florida holiday home for romantic idyll. You are female, beautiful and choose life over existence. Photo please. Reply guaranteed. Box 0767.

SEMI-DETACHED London lady has time to share with semi-detached gentleman, 45ish. Box 0867.

EAST ANGLIAN pilot, with horse racing interests, suffering from boring marriage, needs an attractive, intelligent lady to indulge in aviation fantasies. Box 0967.

MALE, 31, West Mids., professional, bright and witty seeks similar minded female to eat curries and giggle with. Box 1067.

ARTISTIC WOMAN, 29 (never thought it would come to this) seeks male (with sense of humour) 24½-37¾ for exploring, eating, laughing, drinking and playing. Photo appreciated, ALA. Manchester. Box 1167.

PROFESSIONAL GUY, 39, marooned in darkest Wiltshire, seeks slim, N/S lady, 25-35, for laughs, movies, wining, dining. Photo please. Box 1267.

ROMANTIC, ATTRACTIVE, single, North-East lady seeks similar professional, tall, elegant gentleman; humorous, affectionate, caring, to share life's pleasures. Photo/phone number please. Box 1367.

GENTLEMAN, 42, caring, considerate, civilised, opera lover, seeks compatible, intelligent lady for relaxed friendship. Photo appreciated. (S/E) Box 1467.

HANDSOME, OPEN, witty man, single, thirties, seeks complimentary woman for stimulus, fun, friendship. Photo preferred. Cambs/anywhere. Box 1567.

GENTLEMAN (38) single, 6'0", successful career, many interests, working away from home, many interests, seeks attractive, balanced lady, probably aged 23-34 with own sense of style, imagination and humour for weekday nights out. Friendship, fun and more. Box 1667.

DYNAMIC, SLIM female linguist (50) seeks intelligent, single male to share opera, theatre, fun suppers, current affairs, walks, French films. London/Surrey/Hants. Box 1767.

WELL BUILT, elegant, kinky woman (rich?) wanted by discreet, single, mature man for unusual relationship. Box 1867.

SEPARATED MALE graduate, 38, tall, slim, non-smoker, into real ale, country/rock music, keeping fit. Yes, a real culture vulture. Seeking attractive lady for friendship. N. Yorks/Lincs. Letter and photo please. Box 1967.

ATTRACTIVE, HEALTHY, happy 34 yr old successful E. Midlands businessman looking for someone special to share a future. Box 2067.

STALLION (24) seeks frisky filly for fun and frolics. (London) Box 2167.

GENERAL SCHWARZKOPF lookalike. Strong Leo type, very warm, wealthy, wise and kind, loves children, country life, flying and philosophical discussions. If you are thirtyish lady with a lot of love to give, high IQ, graduate, status generous ear lobes and you want your life fulfilled it could begin now! S.E. Box 2267.

CHESHIRE MAN, gorgeous, 35, seeks younger woman for shameless (daytime) dalliance and intellectual fun. Photo/phone please. Box 2367.

ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT, lively woman (32) seeks good-looking Mr Nice-Guy (35-50), Brighton area. No depressos or sex maniacs please. Box 2467.

OLD LADY SEEKS old man, preferably artist/musician, 30s/40s, good looking, good cooking, a touch of humanity, blue jeans, silk and lace. Roses obligatory. Photo necessary. South by the sea. Box 2567.

ARE YOU desperately seeking? Romantic, adventurous, cultured, intelligent, successful, budding millionaire, 30 yrs (Asian-Portuguese) origin. If you are similar look no further. Box 2667.

PRETTY GORGEOUS, fun loving cynic (27), craves slinky, slightly mad female for large amounts of kissing. Box 2867.

ATTENTION ANTIPODEANS! Easy-going, professional man, 37, single, tall, widely travelled, like to meet single Australian, New Zealand woman, 30s. Box 2967.

EXECUTIVE, 50s, underextended seeks discreet, Edinburgh lady for burgeoning friendship. Box 3067.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, 39, slim, single, enjoys life but is missing that special man (you?) 38-50, sense of humour, N/S to share fun and friendship, and possibly more. Photograph appreciated. Surrey/S.E. London. Box 3167.

SAFELY MARRIED lady with style, originality and beautiful speaking voice, needing to get away from domesticity once a week sought by safely married man, 48, witty and wise, leading solitary midweek life in London, for civilised diversions and whatever happens next. Photo appreciated. Box 2767.

CONTINENTAL, VERY attractive 45, outgoing, bubbly blonde seeks professional, generous, understanding gent for fun, relaxation. Box 3267.

MIDDX AREA Anyone out there unattached, non-smoking, male, 40+, warm, honest with the ability to see the lighter side of life. I am female, sensitive and 45. Please reply. Box 3367.

TALL, AMUSING, City gent (30) seeks intelligent, witty young lady to help revitalise life. Photo please. Box 3467.

MARK KNOPFLER lookalike. 35, tall, slim, single, solvent, desires adventurous, broadminded mini-skirted buxom young lady for deep, loving relationship. Leeds based. Can travel or accommodate. Box 3567.

ATTRACTIVE, 55 lady, enterprising, intelligent, cultured seeks similar tall, professional man, 58-65. Kent. Box 3667.

"I married my husband two weeks ago. We met through your small ads a year and two weeks ago. I want you to know about our happiness, and the value of your column!
An Eye Love Reader

FUN-LOVING MALE, 29, 6ft, single, seeks humorous, intelligent and beautiful woman for new experiences in London. Box 3767.

GORGEOUS, NATURAL blonde, 25, well-educated, excellent cook, seeks millionaire. Could I make you happy? Box 3867.

IS THERE ANY more to life than work? Male (27) seeks slim, attractive female for joint investigation. Photo appreciated. Box 3967.

43 YEAR OLD sincere male looking for new life seeks lady experienced in licensed trade for romantic and business adventure. 30-37 years, over 5'6", caring, loving, looking for long-term relationship. Letter and photograph ensures reply. Box 4067.

GLAMOROUS, GRACIOUS, well-educated young lady int. politics, culture, travel seeks exceptional well-to-do/rich white knight. 25-40. Photo please. Box 4167.

ATTRACTIVE, OUTGOING, single male sought by similar successful woman, 34, seeking caring relationship. Sheffield. Box 4267.

MAN OVERBOARD, 27, seeks lively, attractive, N/S, vegetarian, Life Jackette, (20-30) for laughter, letters and occasional paddle. Letter/photo. Anywhere. No sharks! Box 4367.

UNATTACHED, ATTRACTIVE, 29, vegetarian, Greenish, N/S, female, social worker. Looking for caring, sincere male of similar age, outlook. Midlands. Box 4467.

LOVE-STARVED linguist, fortysomething, fit, slim, non-smoker, needs adventurous, London lady for discreet laision/romance. Box 4567.

SLIGHTLY WICKED W6 lady — dynamic, professional, seeks humorous, adventurous twinkly-eyed male (no cigarettes, legal or emotional ties please). Box 5067.

SCOTTISH FARMER wanted, 30-45, for pretty blonde. Box 4667.

TALL, DARK MAN in suit, 32, seeks independent, intelligent woman, 25-35, for usual London pursuits. Gorgeousness and pout optional, but humour essential. No Tories or smokers. Phone and photo please, er...that's it really. Box 4767.

UNATTACHED, NON-SMOKING male, 40s, sought by female counterpart for caring, sharing relationship. Box 4867.

LONELY CHAP, 34, genuine, flexible, 5'8", single, slim, likes music, walking, talking, eating, drinking, films, TV/radio. Not a male chauvinist, seeks relationship with female, any age, anywhere. Looks not important. West Midlands. Box 4967.

HANDSOME ENGLISHMAN, 26, London based but working throughout the South, wishes to meet an attached lady for life-enhancing clandestine lunch. Box 5167.

WARM, LOVABLE, intelligent woman, 40, slim, attractive, lively. Loves music (classical jazz modern), the countryside, gardening, swimming, theatre, cinema, the arts. Seeks big-hearted man to share joix de vive! Must be honest, grounded, with sense of humour. (35-45) N. Staffs/Derbyshire. Box 5267.

REGULAR GUY, 26, London, intelligent, fit, attractive, seeks chubby female 18-28, for sincere friendship and fun. Box 5367.

ATTRACTIVE, AMERICAN, professional woman, 42, seeks British male companionship for cross-cultural adventures. Interests include theatre, music (all kinds), writing, food, laughter. Age unimportant, good looks a plus, an inquiring mind essential. Central London. Photo/phone appreciated. Box 5467.

ENTREPRENEURIAL MAN, 41, 6ft, blue eyes, seeks outstandingly beautiful, intelligent, slim, tall girlfriend, 23+. Honest, generous, own slightly unusual business, marginally unconventional, ex-public school, university, trips abroad, etc etc. Cheltenham/Oxford/London. Box 5567

28 YEAR OLD MAN M.S. sufferer but quite active would like to meet a kind, sexy and caring lady, 18-30 for lasting relationship. Photo appreciated. Brighton area. Box 5667.

TALL, ATTRACTIVE company director, 50, seeks interesting lady friend for discreet fun liaisons. London/Home Counties West. Box 5767.

PLEASING CHALLENGE: an affectionate, slim young lady is needed for long-term rewarding remedial work sharing her sensually loving skills with this tall, personable, generous but rather inhibited middle-aged male. Pleasurable, amorous evenings once a week (maybe more) for mutually advantageous therapy. East Midland areas. Letter, photo essential please. Box 5867.

GILLIAN. I called on days and times you stated. Your card took four weeks to reach me. (Issue 15th March.) Please send photo and await my calls. Box 5967.

SENSUAL AND EXOTIC 30 yr old New Zealand lady, seeks discreet professional gentleman, 50-65 for fun, romance and champagne. Box 6067.

CREATIVE, CARING, cheerful career woman, seeks gentle, funloving, imperfect lionheart. (35-45) Box 6167.

ASPIRING NOVELIST, married male, 36, PhD but no commonsense, seeks attractive woman for discreet affair. Photo appreciated. E. Midlands. Box 6267.

AIDS-FREE handsome African, successful PhD scientist, 35, fit and happily married, seeks female 18-40 for discreet love affair of uncomplicated and mutually rewarding nature. Midlands — but will travel. Photo appreciated. Box 6367.

PHIL COLLINS, loyal, charming, wealthy, 35, seeks Queen Boadicea or Matte Storin. Cardiff or environs. Photo. Box 6967.

TEACHER, MID 50s, seeks slim, younger adventuress to share August U.S. holiday and expenses. Box 7067.

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NETTE, 30, 5'10",
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MAGINATIVE, attrac-
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Valley/London. Box

22) professional seeks
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seeks slim, attractive fe-
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abroad. Box 10767.

IDIAN man, 28, needs
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LIM lady, 40, seeks tall
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returned. Box 10967.

ELOR, 32, tall, slim, blue
successful, lives Lon-
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CTIVE, mildly unconven-
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RIENTAL lady, 40, sin-
need of financial support,
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itially. Box 11267.

UGGABLE, female stu-
intelligent, likes music,
food, cats, seeks unat-
ual, age 28-36(ish), 5'1"+.
W London. Box 11367.

LED Taurus, tied to tires-
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0-50). Box 11467.

NTELLIGENT, profes-
male, affectionately but
arried seeks similar/di-
35-48ish for undemand-
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AR OLD professional
bored lady 20-40, married
screet daytime meetings.
. Tel. No. and instructions
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INESSMAN, 53, offers
odation to country loving
l with style but without
Box 11867.

LONELY, NEUROTIC male (23), Brighton, likes coffee, wine, clouds, trees, seeks similarish young woman for romantic friendship. Box 7267.

WOMAN, 25, would like to meet man living smallholding North Wales. Box 7367.

DECENT MAN, 30, 5'11", O.K. looking, good job, seeks (young?) lady for evenings out, romance etc. Sussexish. Box 7467.

ARTS GRADUATE, 24, 5'10", Irish, well-spoken, travelled, not quite insolvent, seeks affluent, older lady for sightseeing, shows, relationship. London. Photo/phone please. Box 7567.

NO MORE TOY boys! Someone intelligent, caring, romantic, mature, wanted for lovely, loving, sensual lady, 39. I'll relocate! Box 7667.

OXBRIDGE ORIENTAL, 25, seeks attractive woman for companionship. Box 8067.

COCKNEY GENTLEMAN, fifty, fit, solvent, unattached, seeks down to earth lady for fun + romance. Photo/phone number helps, will reciprocate. I'm attractive and so are you. Box 11767.

CREATIVE AND INTELLIGENT, funny and affectionate, slim and attractive female. Interests wide, from Proust to gardening! I'd love to meet 50-ish man, near Cambridge. Box 8467.

DICK DALLIANCE seeks Lucy Liaison. Under the hill with a second wind — let's go for it. Send inside leg measurement and state under what clock on which station. For the price of a stamp this could change your life. Box 8567.

MALE, 31, easy going, looking for girlfriend, 25-35. No need to mention the Eye. You could say we met at the shops. Interests: wine, food, music, beer, sailing, comfort. Bristol area. Box 8667.

WISE AND WITTY male (25-35) invited to share days of Bollinger and blossom with green-eyed girl. Box 8767.

THOROUGHBRED STALLION seeks beautiful filly to come riding. North West. Photo. Box 8867.

BRITISH MUSLIM graduate woman, 23, seeks same man as marriage and travel partner. Box 8967.

WRITER, 60, usually interesting and sometimes amusing, regrettably smokes and eats meats, seeks vivacious woman for visits to theatres, buildings and gardens and possibly more intimate pastimes. Brighton/London. Box 9067.

VIRGIN GRADUATE needs experienced woman! Box 9167.

PRETTY WOMAN with brains needs man with almost everything. 30+. Box 9267.

VIRGO MAN, 44, strong, sexy, sympathetic, happily married but missing excitement, seeks woman in similar situation. Channel Islands. Far East. Photo. Box 9367.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, 27, with varied interests seeking a sincere, attractive, intelligent woman for friendship, fun and laughter. Photo appreciated. (London). Box 9467.

AMERICAN LADY writer, new to the UK, very attractive, 29, slim, 5'8", long dark hair of Scottish Mediterranean extraction speaks French, quiet, kind, passionate, very discreet, likes reading, travelling, animals and nature, seeks kind, honest, sensitive, wealthy, generous, professional gentleman, aged 40-60, non-smoker for long-term friendship and romance. Photo and letter with phone number please. South West. Box 9567.

NORFOLK/SUFFOLK man, 42, separated, creative, unpretentious, not unattractive, likes walking, music, hates poseurs, seeks quiet, warm, humorous, woman of similar outlook. Box 9667.

TALL, SLIM, handsome company director, 39, single, seeks very attractive, intelligent, caring girlfriend for possible long term relationship. W. Midlands based but will travel. Photo appreciated. Box 7767.

I DON'T WANT a husband, I need a lover who is mature in years, fun, uncomplicated, rich, generous and long term. London. Box 8267.

FAT SLAG seeks Finbarr Saunders to tickle her fancy. Beds area. Arf! Arf! Box 8367.

SUCCESSFUL, SINGLE male (39), attractive, kind, intellectual, humorous, seeks younger female for long/short relationship. Scotland/London. Photo please. Box 9767.

FOUR GENTLEMEN, wine connoisseurs, mid 20s, seek similar ladies to share occasional evenings of conviviality. Box 11967.

NERDS, YOBS, male bimbos and life's losers — don't bother. I'm 31 with great looks, mind, body and spirit but sick of independence and longing to meet an intelligent, good-looking gentleman smacking of perfection. Central London. Box 7867.

SENSE OF HUMOUR which I don't want to lose. Warm, generous, bearded Irishman, 41, 6'. Europe based, divorced. Too many lonely nights. Slim woman with lovely eyes needed to rekindle my romantic nature. All letters with photo replied to. Box 7967.

BORED WITH humourless Europeans, ex-pat girl 28, seeks male wit worthy of journeys home. Box 9867.

SLIM, PRESENTABLE, male, 40; single, professional, solvent, enjoys skiing, travel, music. Seeks lady (30ish) for drinks, dinners and fun. Richmond based. Letter and photo please. Box 9967.

GENTLE, ROMANTIC (55) amusing, affluentish, caring, passionate, invites non-glitzy, potential muse to be pampered and adored. Photograph please. Box 10067.

EDUCATED N.Z. MAN, 44, 5'7", attractive, positive, versatile, London, likes children, seeks stylish, intelligent, country-loving, N/S woman for long-term open relationship. Letter/photo please. Box 10167.

ENGLISH ROSE, 30s, fading through neglect, seeks strong, but kind nurture from tall, attractive and confident male. Thames Valley. Letter and phone no. to Box 10267.

WRITER/BUSINESSMAN with four children and no wife seeks intelligent woman friend. Likes travel, novels, poetry, painting, gossip. Sense of humour, but a bit critical. Yorkshire. Box 10367.

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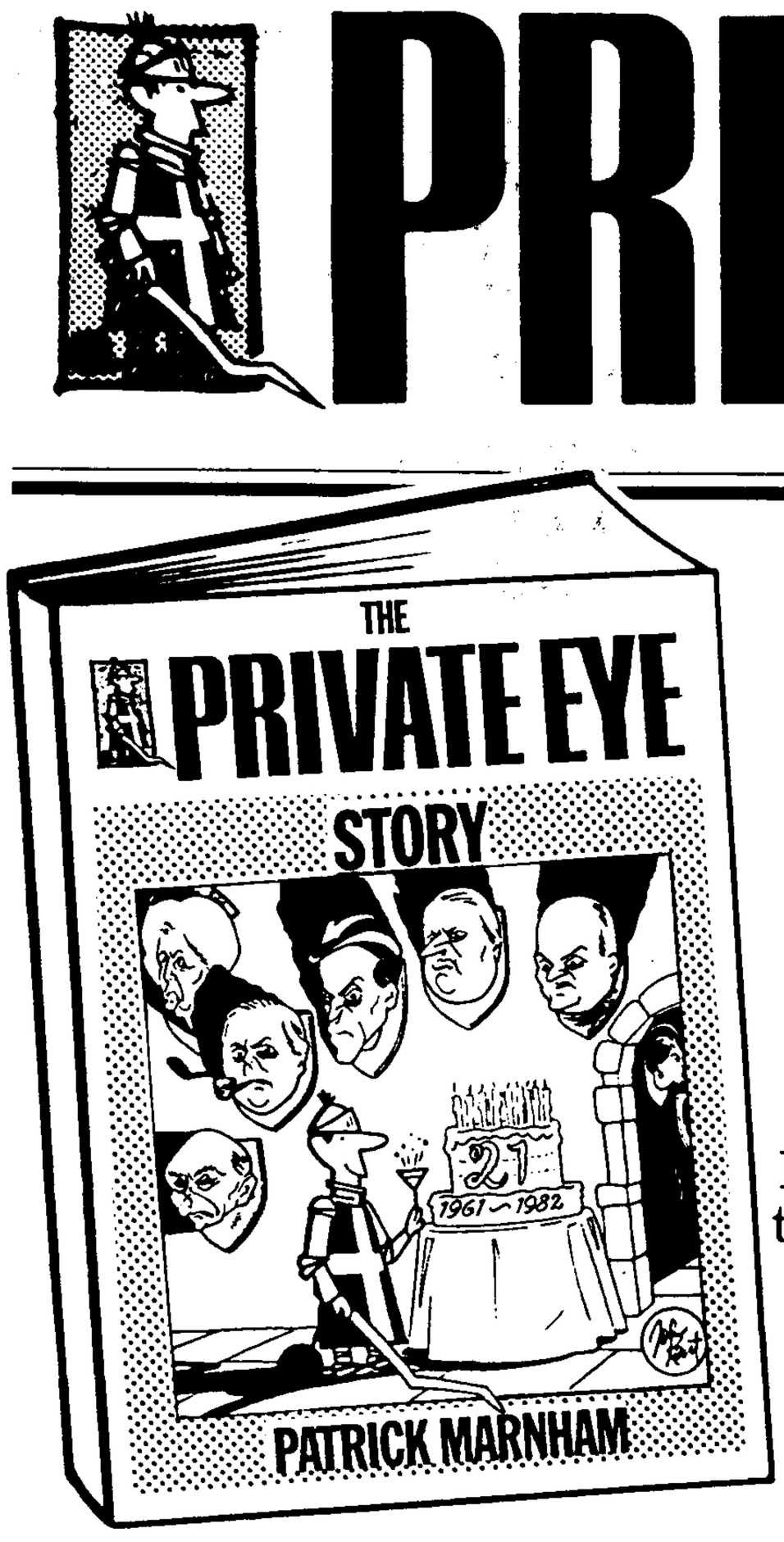

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Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle St, London W1V 5RG. 071-437 4017. Printed by East End Offset Ltd, Empson St, London E3 3LT. Distributed by P.E. Distribution, Mortimer Hse, 230/236 Lavender Hill, London SW11 1LE. 071-223 9971